

CUSTOM EDITION FOR GRAND VALLEY STATE

# THE HUMAN RECORD

SOURCES OF GLOBAL HISTORY



ANDREA / OVERFIELD

FOURTH EDITION





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**Alfred J. Andrea**

*University of Vermont*

**James H. Overfield**

*University of Vermont*

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by Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield  
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by Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield  
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# Prologue

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## *Primary Sources and How We Read Them*

### *What Is History?*

Many students believe that the study of history involves nothing more than memorizing dates, names, battles, treaties, and endless numbers of similar, often uninteresting facts with no apparent relevance to their lives and concerns. After all, so they think, the past is over and done with. Historians know what has happened, and all students have to do is absorb this body of knowledge.

But these notions are wrong. *History involves discovery and interpretation, and its content is vitally relevant to our lives.* Our understanding of history is constantly changing and deepening as historians learn more about the past by discovering new evidence as well as by re-examining old evidence with new questions and methods of analysis. Furthermore, each person who studies the past brings to it a unique perspective and raises questions that are meaningful to that individual. The drive to understand what has gone before us is innately human and springs from our need to know who we are. History serves this function of self-discovery in a special way because of its universality. In short, *the study of history deals with all aspects of past human activity and belief, for there is no subject or concern that lacks a history.* Therefore, each of us can and should explore the origins and historical evolution of whatever is most important to us. Beyond that, history exposes us to new interests, new ways of perceiving reality, and new vistas as we study cultures and times that once were quite unknown to us but which, through our study of the human past, become quite familiar to us.

Regardless of what our questions and interests, old or new, might be, the study and interpretation of our historical heritage involves coming to grips with the dynamics of the historical process. It means exploring how human societies reacted to challenges, threats, and opportunities and how they sought to reshape themselves and the world about them to meet their needs. It means exploring the complex interplay of geography, technology, religion, social structures, and a myriad of other historical factors. It means exploring the ways societies change and the ways they resist change. It means exploring the traditions that have imprinted themselves upon a culture and the ways those traditions have provided continuity over long periods of time. It means exploring the roles of individuals in shaping the course of history and the ways individuals have been shaped by historical circumstances. Indeed, the questions we ask of the past are limited only by our imaginations; the answers we



arrive at are limited only by the evidence and our ability to use that evidence thoroughly and creatively.

This collection of sources will help you discover some of the major lines of global historical development and understand many of the major cultural traditions and forces that have shaped history around the world. The word *history*, which is Greek in origin, means “learning through inquiry,” and that is precisely what historians do. They discover and interpret the past by asking questions and conducting research. Their inquiry revolves around an examination of evidence left by the past. For lack of a better term, historians call that evidence *primary source material*.

### *Primary Sources: Their Value and Limitations*

*Primary sources are records that for the most part have been passed on in written form, thereby preserving the memory of past events.* These written sources include, but are not limited to, official records, law codes, private correspondence, literature, religious texts, merchants’ account books, memoirs, and the list goes on and on. No source by itself contains unadulterated truth or the whole picture. Each gives us only a glimpse of reality, and it is the historian’s task to fit these fragments of the past into a coherent picture.

Imagine for a moment that a mid-twenty-first-century historian decides to write a history of your college class. Think about the primary sources this researcher would use: the school catalogue, class lists, academic transcripts, and similar official documents; class lecture notes, course syllabi, examinations, term papers, and possibly even textbooks; diaries and private letters; the school newspaper, yearbooks, and sports programs; handbills, posters, and even photographs of graffiti; recollections written down or otherwise recorded by some of your classmates long after they graduated. With a bit of thought you could add other items to the list, among them some unwritten sources, such as recordings of popular music and photographs and videotapes of student life and activity. But let us confine ourselves, for the moment, to written records. What do all these documentary sources have in common?

Even this imposing list of sources does not present the past in its entirety. Where do we see the evidence that never made it into any written record, including long telephone calls home, e-mail notes to friends and professors, all-night study groups, afternoons spent at the student union, complaints shared among classmates about professors and courses? Someone possibly recorded memories of some of these events and opinions, but how complete and trustworthy is such evidence? Also consider that all the documents available to this future historian will be fortunate survivors. They will represent only a small percentage of the vast bulk of written material generated during your college career. Thanks to the wastebasket, the “delete” key, the disintegration of materials, and the inevitable loss of life’s memorabilia as years slip by, the evidence available to any future historian will be fragmentary. This is always the case with historical evidence. We cannot preserve the records of



the past in their totality. Clearly, the more remote the past, the more fragmentary our documentary evidence will be. Imagine the feeble chance any particular document from the twelfth century had of surviving the wars, worms, and wastebaskets of the past eight hundred years.

Now let us consider the many individual pieces of surviving documentary evidence relating to your class's history. As we review the list, we see that no single primary source gives us a complete or totally unbiased picture. Each has its perspective, value, and limitations. Imagine that the personal essays submitted by applicants for admission were a historian's only sources of information about the student body. Would it not then be reasonable for this researcher to conclude that the school attracted only the most gifted and interesting people imaginable?

Despite their flaws, however, essays composed by applicants for admission are still important pieces of historical evidence — when used judiciously. They certainly reflect the would-be students' perceptions of the school's cultural values and the types of people it hopes to attract, and usually the applicants are right on the mark because they have read the school's catalogue — itself an exercise in creative advertising. That catalogue, of course, presents an idealized picture of campus life. But it has value for the careful researcher because it reflects the values of the faculty and administrators who composed it. It also provides useful information regarding rules and regulations, courses, instructors, school organizations, and similar items. That factual information, however, is the raw material of history, not history itself, and certainly it does not reflect the full historical reality of your class's collective experience.

What is true of the catalogue is equally true of the student newspaper and every other piece of evidence pertinent to your class. Each primary source is a part of a larger whole, but as we have already seen, we do not have all the pieces. Think of historical evidence in terms of a jigsaw puzzle. Many of the pieces are missing, but it is possible to put most, though probably not all, of the remaining pieces together in a reasonable fashion to form a fairly accurate and coherent picture. The picture that emerges might not be complete (it never is), but it is useful and valid. The keys to fitting these pieces together are hard work and imagination. Each is absolutely necessary.

### *Examining the Sources*

Hard work speaks for itself, but students are often unaware that the historian also needs imagination to reconstruct the past. After all, many students ask, doesn't history consist of strictly defined and irrefutable dates, names, and facts? Where does imagination enter into the process of learning these facts?

Again, let us consider your class's history and its documentary sources. Many of those documents provide factual data — dates, names, grades, statistics. While these data are important, individually and collectively they have no historical meaning until they have been *interpreted*. Your college class is more than a collection of statistics and facts. It is a group of individuals who, despite their differences, share and help mold a collective experience. It is a

community evolving within a particular time and place. Influenced by its environment, it is, in turn, an influence on that environment. Any valid or useful history must reach beyond dates, names, and facts and interpret the historical characteristics and role of your class. What were its values? How did it change and why? What impact did it have? These are some of the important questions a historian asks of the evidence. The answers the historian achieves help us gain insight into ourselves, our society, and our human nature.

To arrive at answers, the historian must examine each and every piece of relevant evidence in its full context and wring from that evidence as many *inferences* as possible. Facts are the foundation stones of history, but inferences are its edifices. *An inference is a logical conclusion drawn from evidence, and it is the heart and soul of historical inquiry.*

Every American schoolchild learns that "In fourteen hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." That fact is worthless, however, unless the individual understands the motives, causes, and significance of this late-fifteenth-century voyage. Certainly a historian must know when Columbus sailed west. After all, time is history's framework. *Yet the questions historians ask go far beyond simple chronology.* Why did Columbus sail west? What factors made possible Spain's engagement in such enterprises at this time? Why were Europeans willing and able to exploit, as they did, the so-called New World? What were the short- and long-term consequences of the European presence in the Americas? These are some of the significant questions to which historians seek inferential answers, and those answers can only be found in the evidence.

One noted historian, Robin Winks, has written a book titled *The Historian as Detective*, and the image is appropriate although inexact. Like the detective, the historian examines clues in order to reconstruct events. The detective, however, is essentially interested in discovering what happened, who did it, and why, whereas the historian goes one step beyond and asks what it all means. *In addressing the question of meaning, the historian transforms simple curiosity about past events into a humanistic discipline.*

As a humanist, the historian seeks insight into the human condition, but that insight cannot be based on theories spun out of fantasy, wishful thinking, or preconceived notions. It must be based on a methodical and probing investigation of the evidence. Like a detective interrogating witnesses, the historian also must carefully examine the testimony of sources. First and foremost, the historian must evaluate the *validity* of the source. Is it what it purports to be? Artful forgeries have misled many historians. Even if the source is authentic (and most are), it still can be misleading. The possibility always exists that the source's author lied or deliberately misrepresented reality. Even if this is not the case, the historian can easily be led astray by not fully understanding the *perspective* reflected in the document. As any detective who has examined a number of eyewitnesses to an event knows, witnesses' reports often differ radically. The detective has the opportunity to re-examine witnesses and offer them the opportunity to change their testimony in the light



of new evidence and deeper reflection. The historian is usually not so fortunate. Even when the historian compares a piece of documentary evidence with other evidence in order to uncover its flaws, there is no way to cross-examine it. Given this fact, it is absolutely necessary for the historian to understand as fully as possible the source's perspective. Thus, the historian must ask several key questions — all of which share the letter W. *What* kind of document is this? *Who* wrote it? *For whom* and *why*? *Where* was it composed and *when*?

The *what* is important because understanding the nature of a particular source can save the historian a great deal of frustration. Many historical sources simply do not address the questions a historian would like to ask of them. That future historian would be foolish to try to learn much about the academic quality of your school's courses from a study of the registrar's class lists and grade sheets. Student and faculty class notes, copies of syllabi, examinations, papers, and textbooks would be far more useful sources.

*Who*, *for whom*, and *why* are equally important questions. The school catalogue undoubtedly addresses some issues pertaining to student social life. But should this document — designed to attract potential students and to place the school in the best possible light — be read and accepted uncritically? Obviously not. It must be tested against student testimony, which is discovered in such sources as private letters, memoirs, posters, the student newspaper, and the yearbook.

*Where* and *when* are also important questions to ask of any primary source. As a rule, distance in space and time from an event colors perceptions and can diminish the validity of a source's testimony. The recollections of a person celebrating a twenty-fifth class reunion could be insightful and valuable. Conceivably this graduate now has a perspective and information that he or she lacked a quarter of a century earlier. Just as conceivably, however, that person's memory might be playing tricks. A source can be so close to or so distant from the event it deals with that its view is distorted or totally erroneous. Even so, the source is not necessarily worthless. Often the blind spots and misinformation within a source reveal to the researcher important insights into the author's attitudes and sources of information.

The historical detective's task is difficult. In addition to constantly questioning the validity and particular perspectives of available sources, the historical researcher must often use whatever evidence is available in imaginative ways. The researcher must interpret these fragmentary and flawed glimpses of the past and piece together the resultant inferences and insights as well as possible. While recognizing that a complete picture of the past is impossible, the historian assumes the responsibility of recreating a past that is valid and has meaning for the present.

### *You and the Sources*

*This book will actively involve you in the work of historical inquiry by asking you to draw inferences based on your analysis of primary source evidence. This is*

not an easy task, especially at first, but it is well within your capability. Moreover, your professor and we, the authors, will be helping you all along the way.

You realize by now that historians do not base their conclusions on analysis of a single isolated source. Historical research consists of laborious sifting through mountains of documents. We have already done much of this work for you by selecting, paring down, and annotating important sources that individually allow you to gain some significant insight into a particular issue or moment in the long and complex history of our global community. In doing this for you, we do not relieve you of the responsibility of recognizing that no single source, no matter how rich it might appear, offers a complete picture of the individual or culture that produced it. Each source that appears in this book is a piece of valuable evidence, but you should not forget that it is only partial evidence.

*You will analyze two types of evidence: documents and artifacts.* Each source will be authentic, so you do not have to worry about validating it. We will also supply you with the information necessary to place each piece of evidence into its proper context and will suggest questions you legitimately can and should ask of each source. If you carefully read the introductions and notes, the suggested Questions for Analysis, and, most important of all, the sources themselves — and think about what you are doing — solid inferences will follow.

To illustrate how you should go about this task and what is expected of you, we will take you through a sample exercise, step by step. We will analyze two sources: a document from the pen of Christopher Columbus and an early sixteenth-century woodcut. By the end of this exercise, if you have worked closely with us, you should be ready to begin interpreting sources on your own.

Let us now look at the document. We present it just as it would appear in any chapter of this book: first an introduction, then suggested Questions for Analysis, and finally the source itself, with explanatory notes. Because we want to give you a full introduction to the art of documentary source analysis, this excerpt is longer than most documents in this book. Also, to help you refer back to the letter as we analyze it, we have numbered each fifth line. No other sources in this book will have numbered lines. Our notes that comment on the text are probably fuller than necessary, but we prefer to err on the side of providing too much information and help rather than too little. But do not let the length of the document or its many notes intimidate you. Once you get into the source, you should find it fairly easy going.

Your first step in analyzing any source in this book is to read the introduction and the Questions for Analysis. The former places the source into context; the latter provide direction when it comes time to analyze the source. One important point to keep in mind is that every historian approaches a source with at least one question, even though it might be vaguely formulated. Like the detective, the historian wants to discover some particular truth or shed light on an issue. This requires asking specific questions of the wit-



nesses or, in the historian's case, of the evidence. These questions should not be prejudgments. One of the worst errors a historian can make is setting out to prove a point or to defend an ideological position. Questions are simply starting points, nothing else, but they are essential. Therefore, as you approach a source, have your question or questions fixed in your mind and constantly remind yourself as you work your way through a source what issue or issues you are investigating. We have provided you with a number of suggested questions for each source. Perhaps you or your professor will want to ask other questions. Whatever the case, keep focused on these questions and issues, and take notes as you read each source. Never rely on unaided memory; it will almost inevitably lead you astray.

*Above all else, you must be honest and thorough as you study a source.* Read each explanatory footnote carefully, lest you misunderstand a word or an allusion. Try to understand exactly what the source is saying and what its author's perspective is. Be careful not to wrench items, words, or ideas out of context, thereby distorting them. Above all, read the entire source so that you understand as fully as possible what it says and, just as important, what it does not say.

This is not as difficult as it sounds. It just takes concentration and a bit of work. To illustrate the point, let us read and analyze Christopher Columbus's letter and, in the process, try to answer the core question: What evidence is there in this document that allows us to judge Columbus's reliability as a reporter? By addressing this issue, we will actually answer questions 1–5 and 8.

## “With the Royal Standard Unfurled”



### ▼ *Christopher Columbus,* A LETTER CONCERNING RECENTLY DISCOVERED ISLANDS

Sixteenth-century Spain's emergence as the dominant power in the Americas is forever associated with the name of a single mariner — Christopher Columbus (1451–1506). Sponsored by King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, this Genoese sea captain sailed west into the Atlantic seeking a new route to the empires of East Asia described by John Mandeville (Volume I, Chapter 12, source 102), Marco Polo (Volume I, Chapter 12, source 105), and other travel writers he had avidly read. On October 12, 1492, his fleet of three ships dropped anchor at a small Bahamian island, which Columbus claimed for Spain, naming it San Salvador. The fleet then sailed to two larger islands, which he named Juana and Española (today known as Cuba and Hispaniola).

After exploring these two islands and establishing on Española the fort of Navidad del Señor, Columbus departed for Spain in January 1493. On his way home, the admiral prepared a preliminary account of his expedition to the “Indies” for Luis de Santángel, a counselor to King Ferdinand and one of Columbus's enthusiastic supporters. In composing the letter, Columbus borrowed heavily

from his official ship's log, often lifting passages verbatim. When he landed in Lisbon in early March, Columbus dispatched the letter overland, expecting it to precede him to the Spanish royal court in faraway Barcelona, where Santángel would communicate its contents to the two monarchs. The admiral was not disappointed. His triumphal reception at the court in April was proof that the letter had served its purpose.

As you analyze the document, be aware of several facts. The admiral was returning with only two of his vessels. He had lost his flagship, the *Santa Maria*, when it was wrecked on a reef off present-day Haiti on Christmas Day. Also, many of Columbus's facts and figures reflect more his enthusiasm than dispassionate analysis. His estimates of the dimensions of the two main islands he explored grossly exaggerate their sizes, and his optimistic report of the wide availability of such riches as gold, spices, cotton, and mastic was not borne out by subsequent explorations and colonization. Although he obtained items of gold and received plenty of reports of nearby gold mines, the metal was rare in the islands. Moreover, the only indigenous spice proved to be the fiery chili pepper; the wild cotton was excellent but not plentiful; and mastic, an eastern Mediterranean aromatic gum, did not exist in the Caribbean.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Columbus's description of the physical attributes of the islands suggest about the motives for his voyage?
2. Often the eyes only see what the mind prepares them to see. Is there any evidence that Columbus saw what he wanted to see and discovered what he expected to discover?
3. Is there any evidence that Columbus's letter was a carefully crafted piece of self-promotion by a person determined to prove he had reached the Indies?
4. Is there any evidence that Columbus attempted to present an objective and fairly accurate account of what he had seen and experienced?
5. In light of your answers to questions 3 and 4, to what extent, if at all, can we trust Columbus's account?
6. What do the admiral's admitted actions regarding the natives and the ways in which he describes these people allow us to conclude about his attitudes toward these "Indians" and his plans for them?
7. What does this letter tell us about the culture of the Tainos on the eve of European expansion into their world? Is there anything that Columbus tells us about these people that does not seem to ring totally true?
8. How, if at all, does this letter illustrate that a single historical source read in isolation can mislead the researcher?



1 Sir, as I know that you will be pleased at the great victory with which Our Lord has crowned my voyage, I write this to you, from which you will learn how in thirty-three days, I passed from  
 5 the Canary Islands to the Indies<sup>1</sup> with the fleet which the most illustrious king and queen, our sovereigns, gave to me. And there I found very many islands filled with people<sup>2</sup> innumerable, and of them all I have taken possession for their  
 10 highnesses, by proclamation made and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me. To the first island which I found, I gave the name *San Salvador*,<sup>3</sup> in remembrance of the Divine Majesty, Who has marvelously be-  
 15 stowed all this; the Indians call it "Guanahani." To the second, I gave the name *Isla de Santa Maria de Concepción*,<sup>4</sup> to the third, *Fernandina*; to the fourth, *Isabella*; to the fifth, *Isla Juana*,<sup>5</sup> and so to each one I gave a new name.

20 When I reached Juana, I followed its coast to the westward, and I found it to be so extensive that I thought that it must be the mainland, the province of Catayo.<sup>6</sup> And since there were neither towns nor villages on the seashore, but only  
 25 small hamlets, with the people of which I could not have speech, because they all fled immediately, I went forward on the same course, thinking that I should not fail to find great cities and towns. And, at the end of many leagues,<sup>7</sup> seeing  
 30 that there was no change and that the coast was bearing me northwards, which I wished to avoid, since winter was already beginning, . . . [I] retraced my path as far as a certain harbor known to me. And from that point, I sent two men in-  
 35 land to learn if there were a king or great cities. They traveled three days' journey and found an

infinity of small hamlets and people without number, but nothing of importance. For this reason, they returned.

I understood sufficiently from other Indians, 40 whom I had already taken,<sup>8</sup> that this land was nothing but an island. And therefore I followed its coast eastwards for one hundred and seven leagues to the point where it ended. And from that cape, I saw another island, distant eighteen 45 leagues from the former, to the east, to which I at once gave the name "Española." And I went there and followed its northern coast, as I had in the case of Juana, to the eastward for one hundred and eighty-eight great leagues in a straight 50 line. This island and all the others are very fertile to a limitless degree, and this island is extremely so. In it there are many harbors on the coast of the sea, beyond comparison with others which I know in Christendom, and many rivers, 55 good and large, which is marvelous. Its lands are high, and there are in it very many sierras and very lofty mountains, beyond comparison with the island of Teneriffe.<sup>9</sup> All are most beautiful, of a thousand shapes, and all are accessible and 60 filled with trees of a thousand kinds and tall, and they seem to touch the sky. And I am told that they never lose their foliage, as I can understand, for I saw them as green and as lovely as they are in Spain in May, and some of them were 65 flowering, some bearing fruit, and some in another stage, according to their nature. And the nightingale was singing and other birds of a thousand kinds in the month of November there where I went. There are six or eight kinds of 70 palm, which are a wonder to behold on account of their beautiful variety, but so are the other

<sup>1</sup>An inexact term that referred to the entire area of the Indian Ocean and East Asia.

<sup>2</sup>Tainos. See Volume I, Chapter 11, source 98.

<sup>3</sup>"Holy Savior," Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>"The Island of Holy Mary of the Immaculate Conception." Catholics believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was absolutely sinless, to the point that she was conceived without the stain of Original Sin (the sin of Adam and Eve) on her soul.

<sup>5</sup>Named for Prince Juan, heir apparent of Castile.

<sup>6</sup>The Spanish term for *Cathay*, which technically was only northern China. Columbus, however, used the term to refer to the entire Chinese Empire of the Great Khan (see note 20).

<sup>7</sup>A league is three miles.

<sup>8</sup>Columbus took seven Tainos on board at San Salvador to instruct them in Spanish and use them as guides and interpreters.

<sup>9</sup>One of the Canary Islands.

trees and fruits and plants. In it are marvelous pine groves, and there are very large tracts of cultivatable lands, and there is honey, and there are birds of many kinds and fruits in great diversity. In the interior are mines of metals, and the population is without number. Española is a marvel.

The sierras and mountains, the plains and arable lands and pastures, are so lovely and rich for planting and sowing, for breeding cattle of every kind, for building towns and villages. The harbors of the sea here are such as cannot be believed to exist unless they have been seen, and so with the rivers, many and great, and good waters, the majority of which contain gold. In the trees and fruits and plants, there is a great difference from those of Juana. In this island, there are many spices and great mines of gold and of other metals.

The people of this island, and of all the other islands which I have found and of which I have information, all go naked, men and women, as their mothers bore them,<sup>10</sup> although some women cover a single place with the leaf of a plant or with a net of cotton which they make for the purpose. They have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to use them, not because they are not well built men and of handsome stature, but because they are very marvelously timorous. They have no other arms than weapons made of canes, cut in seeding time, to the ends of which they fix a small sharpened stick. And they do not dare to make use of these, for many times it has happened that I have sent ashore two or three men to some town to have speech, and countless people have come out to them, and as soon as they have seen my men approaching they have fled, even a father not waiting for his son. And this, not because ill has been

done to anyone; on the contrary, at every point where I have been and have been able to have speech, I have given to them of all that I had, such as cloth and many other things, without receiving anything for it; but so they are, incurably timid. It is true that, after they have been reassured and have lost their fear, they are so guileless and so generous with all they possess, that no one would believe it who has not seen it. They never refuse anything which they possess, if it be asked of them; on the contrary, they invite anyone to share it, and display as much love as if they would give their hearts, and whether the thing be of value or whether it be of small price, at once with whatever trifle of whatever kind it may be that is given to them, with that they are content.<sup>11</sup> I forbade that they should be given things so worthless as fragments of broken crockery and scraps of broken glass, and ends of straps, although when they were able to get them, they fancied that they possessed the best jewel in the world. So it was found that a sailor for a strap received gold to the weight of two and a half *castellanos*,<sup>12</sup> and others much more for other things which were worth much less. As for new *blancas*,<sup>13</sup> for them they would give everything which they had, although it might be two or three *castellanos*' weight of gold or an *arroba*<sup>14</sup> or two of spun cotton. . . . They took even the pieces of the broken hoops of the wine barrels and, like savages, gave what they had, so that it seemed to me to be wrong and I forbade it. And I gave a thousand handsome good things, which I had brought, in order that they might conceive affection, and more than that, might become Christians and be inclined to the love and service of their highnesses and of the whole Castilian nation, and strive to aid us and to give

<sup>10</sup>Marco Polo described a number of islanders in South Asia who went naked. Compare also Columbus's description of this nudity with John Mandeville's account of the people of Sumatra in Volume I, Chapter 12, source 102.

<sup>11</sup>Compare this with Mandeville's description of the people of Sumatra's attitude toward possessions (Volume I, Chapter 12, source 102).

<sup>12</sup>A gold coin of considerable value that bore the seal of Castile.

<sup>13</sup>The smallest and least valuable Spanish coin, it was worth about one-sixtieth of a *castellano*. Composed of billon, a mixture of copper and silver, it had a whitish hue, hence the name *blanca*, or white.

<sup>14</sup>The equivalent of about sixteen skeins, or balls, of spun textile.



us of the things which they have in abundance and which are necessary to us. And they do not know any creed and are not idolaters;<sup>15</sup> only they all believe that power and good are in the heavens, and they are very firmly convinced that I, with these ships and men, came from the heavens, and in this belief they everywhere received me, after they had overcome their fear. And this does not come because they are ignorant; on the contrary, they are of a very acute intelligence and are men who navigate all those seas, so that it is amazing how good an account they give of everything, but it is because they have never seen people clothed or ships of such a kind.

And as soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the first island which I found, I took by force some of them, in order that they might learn and give me information of that which there is in those parts, and so it was that they soon understood us, and we them, either by speech or signs, and they have been very serviceable. I still take them with me, and they are always assured that I come from Heaven, for all the intercourse which they have had with me; and they were the first to announce this wherever I went, and the others went running from house to house and to the neighboring towns, with loud cries of, "Come! Come to see the people from Heaven!" So all, men and women alike, when their minds were set at rest concerning us, came, so that not one, great or small, remained behind, and all brought something to eat and drink, which they gave with extraordinary affection. In all the island, they have very many canoes, like rowing *fustas*,<sup>16</sup> some larger, some smaller, and some are larger than a

*fusta* of eighteen benches. They are not so broad, because they are made of a single log of wood, but a *fusta* would not keep up with them in rowing, since their speed is a thing incredible. And in these they navigate among all those islands, which are innumerable, and carry their goods. One of these canoes I have seen with seventy and eighty men in her, and each one with his oar.

In all these islands, I saw no great diversity in the appearance of the people or in their manners and language. On the contrary, they all understand one another,<sup>17</sup> which is a very curious thing, on account of which I hope that their highnesses will determine upon their conversion to our holy faith, towards which they are very inclined.

I have already said how I have gone one hundred and seven leagues in a straight line from west to east along the seashore of the island Juana, and as a result of that voyage, I can say that this island is larger than England and Scotland together, for, beyond these one hundred and seven leagues, there remain to the westward two provinces to which I have not gone. One of these provinces they call "Avan,"<sup>18</sup> and there the people are born with tails;<sup>19</sup> and these provinces cannot have a length of less than fifty or sixty leagues, as I could understand from those Indians whom I have and who know all the islands.

The other, Española, has a circumference greater than all Spain, . . . since I voyaged along one side one hundred and eighty-eight great leagues in a straight line from west to east. It is a land to be desired and, seen, it is never to be left. And . . . I have taken possession for their highnesses . . . in this Española, in [a] situation

<sup>15</sup>Normally the term *idolater* means anyone who worships idols, or sacred statues, but it is unclear exactly what Columbus means here. The Tainos worshipped a variety of deities and spirits known as *cemis*, whom they represented in stone statues and other handcrafted images, also known as *cemis*. For further information on Taino *cemis* see Volume I, Chapter 11, source 98. It is hard to imagine Columbus's not having seen carved *cemis*, which filled the Tainos' villages. To compound the problem of what Columbus meant by their not being idolaters, consider lines 297–299 of this letter, where the admiral refers to idolaters who will be enslaved.

<sup>16</sup>A small oared boat, often having one or two masts.

<sup>17</sup>This is not totally accurate. Columbus's Taino interpreters knew only a little of the language of the Ciguayos whom the admiral encountered on Española in January 1493 (see note 27).

<sup>18</sup>Which the Spaniards transformed into La Habana, or Havana.

<sup>19</sup>Marco Polo reported the existence of tailed humans in the islands of Southeast Asia. In his description of the various fantastic people who supposedly inhabited the islands of Southeast Asia, John Mandeville listed hairy persons who walked on all fours and climbed trees.

most convenient and in the best position for the  
 220 mines of gold and for all intercourse as well with  
 the mainland . . . belonging to the Grand Khan,<sup>20</sup>  
 where will be great trade and gain. I have taken  
 possession of a large town, to which I gave the  
 name *Villa de Navidad*,<sup>21</sup> and in it I have made  
 225 fortifications and a fort, which now will by this  
 time be entirely finished, and I have left in it  
 sufficient men for such a purpose with arms and  
 artillery and provisions for more than a year, and  
 a *fusta*, and one, a master of all seacraft, to build  
 230 others, and great friendship with the king of that  
 land, so much so, that he was proud to call me,  
 and to treat me as a brother. And even if he were  
 to change his attitude to one of hostility towards  
 these men, he and his do not know what arms  
 235 are and they go naked, as I have already said,  
 and are the most timorous people that there are  
 in the world, so that the men whom I have left  
 there alone would suffice to destroy all that land,  
 and the island is without danger for their per-  
 240 sons, if they know how to govern themselves.<sup>22</sup>

In all these islands, it seems to me that all men  
 are content with one woman, and to their chief  
 or king they give as many as twenty.<sup>23</sup> It appears  
 to me that the women work more than the men.  
 245 And I have not been able to learn if they hold  
 private property; what seemed to me to appear

was that, in that which one had, all took a share,  
 especially of eatable things.<sup>24</sup>

In these islands I have so far found no human  
 monstrosities, as many expected,<sup>25</sup> but on the  
 contrary the whole population is very well-  
 formed, nor are they negroes as in Guinea,<sup>26</sup> but  
 their hair is flowing, and they are not born where  
 there is intense force in the rays of the sun; it is  
 true that the sun has there great power, . . .

As I have found no monsters, so I have had no  
 report of any, except in an island "Quaris," the  
 second at the coming into the Indies, which is  
 inhabited by a people who are regarded in all  
 the islands as very fierce and who eat human flesh.  
 They have many canoes with which they range  
 through all the islands of India and pillage and  
 take as much as they can.<sup>27</sup> They are no more  
 malformed than the others, except that they have  
 the custom of wearing their hair long like  
 women, and they use bows and arrows of the same  
 cane stems, with a small piece of wood at the  
 end, owing to lack of iron which they do not  
 possess. They are ferocious among these other  
 people who are cowardly to an excessive degree,  
 but I make no more account of them than of the  
 rest. These are those who have intercourse with  
 the women of "Matinino," which is the first  
 island met on the way from Spain to the Indies,

<sup>20</sup>The Mongol emperor of Cathay. Columbus did not know that the Mongol khans had been expelled from power in China in 1368.

<sup>21</sup>"Village of the Nativity" (of the Lord). The destruction of the *Santa Maria* off the coast of Española on Christmas Day (Navidad del Señor) forced Columbus to leave behind thirty-nine sailors at the village garrison, which he named after the day of the incident.

<sup>22</sup>When Columbus returned to Española in November 1493, he discovered the fortification burned to the ground and all thirty-nine men dead. Almost as soon as Columbus had sailed away, the Spaniards began fighting among themselves and split into factions, with only eleven remaining to garrison the fort. The widely scattered groups of Spaniards were wiped out by Tainos led by a chief named Caonabó. Guacanagarí, the king to whom Columbus refers, apparently was wounded trying to defend the Spaniards.

<sup>23</sup>Generally only chiefs could afford large numbers of wives because of the substantial bride prices that were paid, in goods or services, to the families of the women. Notwithstanding, many commoners could and did have two or three wives.

<sup>24</sup>See note 11.

<sup>25</sup>Europeans were prepared to find various races of monstrous humans and semi-humans in the Indies. Accepted accounts of the wonders of the East, such as the travelogue of John Mandeville, told of dog-headed people and a species of individuals who, lacking heads, had an eye on each shoulder. These stories had been inherited from ancient Greek, Roman, and Arabic ethnographies.

<sup>26</sup>Sub-Saharan West Africa (see Volume I, Chapter 12, source 111).

<sup>27</sup>These were the Caribs, who shortly before the arrival of Columbus began to displace the Arawak peoples of the Lesser Antilles, the archipelago to the east and south of Hispaniola. Sixteenth-century Spanish writers unanimously agreed that the Caribs were fierce warriors and cannibalistic. On January 13, 1493, Columbus and his men had a short skirmish on Española with some previously unknown natives, who the admiral incorrectly assumed were Caribs. They were actually Ciguayos, who were less peaceful than the Tainos.



275 in which there is not a man. The women  
engage in no feminine occupation, but use  
bows and arrows of cane, like those already  
mentioned, and they arm and protect them-  
selves with plates of copper, of which they have  
280 much.<sup>28</sup>

In another island, which they assure me is  
larger than Española, the people have no hair.<sup>29</sup>  
In it, there is gold incalculable, and from it and  
from the other islands, I bring with me Indians  
285 as evidence.<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion, to speak only of that which has  
been accomplished on this voyage, which was so  
hasty, their highnesses can see that I will give  
them as much gold as they may need, if their  
290 highnesses will render me very slight assistance;  
moreover, spice and cotton, as much as their  
highnesses shall command; and mastic,<sup>31</sup> as much  
as they shall order to be shipped and which, up to  
now, has been found only in Greece, in the island  
295 of Chios,<sup>32</sup> and the Seignory<sup>33</sup> sells it for what it  
pleases; and aloe wood, as much as they shall  
order to be shipped, and slaves, as many as they  
shall order to be shipped and who will be from  
the idolaters.<sup>34</sup> And I believe that I have found  
300 rhubarb and cinnamon,<sup>35</sup> and I shall find a thou-  
sand other things of value, which the people

whom I have left there will have discovered, for  
I have not delayed at any point, so far as the wind  
allowed me to sail, except in the town of Navidad,  
in order to leave it secured and well established, 305  
and in truth, I should have done much more, if  
the ships had served me, as reason demanded.

This is enough . . . and the eternal God, our  
Lord, Who gives to all those who walk in His way  
triumph over things which appear to be impos- 310  
sible, and this was notably one; for, although men  
have talked or have written of these lands, all  
was conjectural, without suggestion of ocular  
evidence, but amounted only to this, that those  
who heard for the most part listened and judged 315  
it to be rather a fable than as having any vestige  
of truth. So that, since Our Redeemer<sup>36</sup> has given  
this victory to our most illustrious king and  
queen, and to their renowned kingdoms, in so  
great a matter, for this all Christendom ought to 320  
feel delight and make great feasts and give sol-  
emn thanks to the Holy Trinity<sup>37</sup> with many sol-  
emn prayers for the great exaltation which they  
shall have, in the turning of so many people to  
our holy faith, and afterwards for temporal 325  
benefits,<sup>38</sup> for not only Spain but all Christians  
will have hence refreshment and gain.

<sup>28</sup>The same account appears in Columbus's log. Father Ramón Pane, who composed an ethnographic study of Taino culture during Columbus's second voyage of 1493–1494 (see Volume I, Chapter 11, source 98), also related in great detail the legend of the island of Martinino, where only women resided. The story, as reported by Pane, however, contains no hint that they were warlike women. Apparently Columbus took this Taino legend and combined it with the Greco-Roman myth of the warrior Amazons (see Volume I, Chapter 4, source 31). Mandeville wrote of the land of Amazonia, populated totally by warrior women, and Marco Polo described two Asian islands, one inhabited solely by women and another exclusively by men. There is no evidence that this female society reported by Columbus and Pane ever existed in the Caribbean. The Tainos, however, who were essentially a stone-age people, did import from South America an alloy of copper and gold, which they used for ornaments.

<sup>29</sup>John Mandeville described people with little body hair, and Marco Polo told of Buddhist monks whose heads and faces were shaved.

<sup>30</sup>Columbus brought seven Tainos back to Spain, where they were baptized, with King Ferdinand and Prince Juan act-

ing as godparents. One remained at the Spanish court, where he died, and the others returned with Columbus on his second voyage of 1493.

<sup>31</sup>Columbus and his men wrongly identified a native gumbo-limbo tree, which contains an aromatic resin, with the rare mastic tree, whose costly resin was a profitable trade item for Genoa (see note 33).

<sup>32</sup>An island in the eastern Mediterranean.

<sup>33</sup>The ruling body of Genoa, an Italian city-state. Chios was a possession of Genoa, whose merchants controlled the mastic trade.

<sup>34</sup>Church law forbade the enslavement of Christians, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

<sup>35</sup>Actually, when members of the crew showed Columbus what they thought were aloe, mastic, and cinnamon, the admiral accepted the aloe and mastic as genuine but rejected the supposed cinnamon. One of his lieutenants reported seeing rhubarb while on a scouting expedition.

<sup>36</sup>Jesus Christ.

<sup>37</sup>The Christian belief of three divine persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — contained in a single divine essence.

<sup>38</sup>Benefits that are of this world and last only for a time, as opposed to eternal, or heavenly, rewards.

This in accordance with that which has been accomplished, thus briefly.

330 Done in the caravel,<sup>39</sup> off the Canary Islands,

on the fifteenth of February, in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-three.

At your orders.

El Almirante.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup>A Spanish ocean-going ship.

<sup>40</sup>The Admiral.

### Interpreting Columbus's Letter

Columbus's letter contains a number of interesting facts. For example, the natives Columbus encountered constructed seaworthy canoes and communicated with one another through inter-island travel (lines 181–191). Yet as fascinating and important as such facts are, reading a source with an eye toward garnering tidbits of information is not historical analysis in its fullest sense. *True historical analysis consists of drawing inferential insights from a source and trying to answer, at least in part, the central question of historical study: What does it all mean?* This document allows us to do just that.

*Historians use no secret method or magic formula to draw historical insights from their evidence. All they need are attention to detail, thoroughness, common sense, and a willingness to enter imaginatively into the mind of the source's author as fully and honestly as possible, while trying to set aside personal values and perspectives.* Anyone who is willing to work at it can profitably interpret primary sources.

The researcher always has to evaluate the worth of each source, which means understanding its point of view and reliability. In this letter several things are obvious. Columbus believed he had reached Asian islands (lines 5–23). Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and other writers had provided a number of reference points by which to recognize the Orient (notes 10, 11, 19, 25, 28, and 29), and Columbus believed he had found many of them. Equally obvious is that Columbus tried to present his discoveries in the best light possible. He sent this letter ahead to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella to ensure that when he arrived he would be received with due honor.

Certainly there is exaggeration, self-puffery, error, and possibly even deliberate distortion in this account. As the introduction to the letter informs us, he overestimated the size of several islands (lines 199–206 and 212–215) and, except for chilies, the spices he claimed to have discovered (lines 89, 291, and 299–300) were not there. The admiral also failed to mention that the *Santa Maria* had been lost. Columbus could not escape informing his royal patrons of this unhappy incident, but presumably he wanted to wait until he was at the court, where he could put his own spin on the facts surrounding the incident. Also not mentioned is a skirmish that he and his men had on January 13, 1493, with some hostile strangers, whom he incorrectly assumed were Caribs (note 27). Perhaps that incident, if reported without explanation, would weaken the admiral's implied claim that Spain could easily subjugate these



timid Indians (lines 97–110 and 232–240). Generally, however, despite Columbus's enthusiasm and understandable tendency to exaggerate, to conveniently neglect to mention anything negative, and to see what he wanted to see, the admiral *seems* to have wanted to present an essentially factual account.

One indication of this is how Columbus described the people of these islands. His reading of popular travel accounts had prepared him to encounter every sort of human monstrosity (note 25), and undoubtedly he would have enjoyed reporting such contacts. But he honestly reported that all the natives he encountered were quite unmonstrous in appearance and temperament (lines 249–252). Of course, he reported stories of people with tails, cannibals, and warlike women who lived apart from men (lines 206–211 and 256–282), but it is unlikely that the admiral was deliberately misleading anyone on this issue. The Carib cannibals were real enough. Rumors of tailed people and latter-day Amazons conceivably were nothing more than the natives trying to please Columbus or simply the result of poor communication. It is not difficult to imagine that the admiral inquired after the locations of the various human curiosities whom Mandeville, Polo, and others had placed in the islands of the Indian Ocean, and the Tainos, not knowing what he was asking, agreeably pointed across the waters to other islands.

In fact, this raises one issue that has long vexed us and which goes straight to the heart of the question of this source's overall reliability. *How well was Columbus able to communicate with these people?* Columbus insisted that through gestures and learned words the Spaniards and Tainos were able to communicate with one another (lines 163–169), and he certainly learned enough of the Tainos' language to report that they called the island on which he initially landed *Guanahani* (line 15). Nevertheless, we suspect that, despite Columbus's use of captive interpreters, only the most primitive forms of communication were possible between the Europeans and the Native Americans in 1492–1493. Therefore, we should have a healthy skepticism about anything that Columbus reports about the Tainos' beliefs and cosmological perspectives (for example, lines 150–156 and 169–176).

Still, all things considered, it seems reasonable to conclude that Columbus's letter can be accepted as a generally honest, if not totally accurate, account of his discoveries and experiences. That basic honesty, compromised to an extent by an understandable enthusiasm to present his accomplishments positively, comes through in his attempt to describe the islands' physical qualities and the people he encountered. The picture that emerges tells us a great deal about the complex motives that underlay his great adventure.

We notice that Columbus had taken possession of the lands in the names of the Spanish monarchs and even renamed the islands, without once giving thought to the claims of anyone else (lines 7–19). He also thought nothing of seizing some natives as soon as he arrived (lines 40–41 and 163–169) and of bringing several Indians back to Spain (lines 284–285). Moreover, he noted toward the end of his letter that the monarchs of Spain could obtain as many *slaves* as they desired from among the islands' *idolaters* (lines 297–299). At the

same time (and this might strike the modern student as curious), Columbus claimed that he had acted generously and protectively toward the native people (lines 111–115 and 127–132), and his letter conveys a tone of admiration and even affection for the people whom he had encountered. Indeed, the admiral expressed a deep interest in winning over the native people of the Indies in an avowed hope that they might become Catholic Christians and loyal subjects of Ferdinand and Isabella (lines 143–150), and he even claimed that they were strongly inclined toward religious conversion (lines 194–198). Yet the very qualities that, as Columbus implied, made the Tainos prime candidates for conversion — intelligence, timidity, naiveté, generosity, ignorance, technological backwardness, lack of an articulated religious creed, an ability to communicate freely among themselves, and a sense of wonder at the Europeans — also made them ripe for subjugation.

The tone of this letter suggests that Columbus was concerned with these people as humans and was genuinely interested in helping them achieve salvation through conversion. It is equally clear, however, that Columbus believed he and Catholic Spain had a right and duty to subjugate and exploit these same people. Such tension continued throughout the Spanish colonial experience in the Americas.

Subjugation of the Indians and their lands involved more than just a sense of divine mission and Christian altruism — as real as those motives were. Columbus, his royal patrons, and most others who joined overseas adventures expected to gain in earthly wealth as well (see especially lines 317–327). Even a superficial reading of his letter reveals the admiral's preoccupation with the riches of the islands — riches that it seems he knowingly exaggerated (note 35). Gold, spices, cotton, aromatic mastic, and, of course, slaves were the material rewards that awaited Christian Europeans, and Columbus was fully interested in them and wanted Ferdinand and Isabella to underwrite future trips so that he could discover them in abundance (lines 286–307). So exaggeration can be found in this account, but it seems to be exaggeration based on conviction.

Was Columbus being cynical, hypocritical, or deliberately ironic when in his closing words he claimed that Jesus Christ had provided this great victory to the Spanish monarchs (and indeed to all Christendom) and from that victory would flow the dual benefits of the conversion of so many people and worldly riches (lines 317–327)? Cynicism, hypocrisy, and conscious irony are not likely explanations. It seems more likely that these closing remarks reveal the mind of a man who saw no contradiction between spreading the faith and benefiting materially from that action, even if doing so meant exploiting the converts.

Please note that in presenting this insight, we have tried to avoid moral judgments. This does not mean that we accept slavery as justifiable or believe it is proper to dispossess people of their lands and cultures. What it does mean is that we are trying to understand Columbus and his world view and not to sit in judgment of a man whose values in some respects were radically different from our own. Passing moral judgment on a distant society's values



and the actions that resulted from them might be emotionally satisfying, but it will not change what has happened. Doing so also could conceivably blind the judge to the historical context in which those actions took place. As suggested earlier, *we study the past in order to gain insight and wisdom regarding the human condition. If that insight is to have any validity whatsoever, it must be based on as dispassionate a study of the evidence as possible.*

Another point merits mention. Perhaps you disagree with our conclusion that Columbus's letter is basically an honest and valuable source, despite its shortcomings. Well, if you do, you are in excellent company. Two eminent historians — William D. Phillips, Jr., and Carla Rahn Phillips, in their book *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* — characterize this letter as “a tissue of exaggerations, misconceptions, and outright lies.” We obviously disagree in our interpretation of the degree, nature, and extent of the letter's misstatements. No historian is infallible, and certainly we do not claim that distinction. Moreover, no source is so clear in all respects that it lacks areas of potential disagreement for historians. That, in fact, is one of the exciting aspects of historical research. Despite all the facts and conclusions that historians generally agree on, there are numerous areas in which they carry on spirited debate. *The very nature of history's fragmentary, flawed evidence makes debate inevitable.*

What is more, no historian can possibly see everything there is to be seen in every source. What this means, so far as you are concerned, is that *there is plenty of latitude in the sources that appear in this book for you to arrive at valid insights that are unique to you.* In so doing, however, you must at all times attempt to divorce yourself of present-mindedness and to enter imaginatively into the world of the author whose work you are analyzing. You will note that, as is the case with this letter from Columbus, throughout this book we have endeavored to help you do this by means of suggested Questions for Analysis. Use these questions for guidance, but do not be constrained by them. If you find a question inappropriate, misleading, or wrong-headed in its assumptions, feel free to follow your own mind. Just be ready to defend the questions you have chosen to ask along with the conclusions you have reached in answering them.

We can ask many other questions of Columbus's letter and garner other insights from it. Certainly it tells us a lot about Taino culture. Despite his cultural blinders, his naiveté, his tendency to see what he wanted to see, and his probably exaggerated belief in his ability to communicate with these people, Columbus seems to be a reasonably accurate and perceptive observer. Thus anyone interested in Caribbean cultures before the Europeans had much of a chance to influence them must necessarily look to this and similar accounts of first contacts. In fact, it would be good practice for you, right now, to try to answer question 7, which we have deliberately left unanswered. You will be surprised at how much you can learn about the Tainos from this brief description. As you do this exercise, however, do not forget to ask yourself constantly: How reliable does Columbus appear to be on this specific point, and what is the basis for my conclusion?

After you have tested your own powers of historical analysis in this exercise, it would be wise to put the letter aside for the present. We trust that by now you have a good idea of how to examine and mine a documentary source. Now let us consider artifacts.

### *Unwritten Sources*

Historians distinguish between the prehistorical and historical past, with the chief defining feature of any historical culture being that it provides written records from which we can reconstruct its past. Without a large volume and variety of documentary sources, it is impossible to write any society's history in detail. This is not to say that the unwritten relics of the past are worthless. Archeology proves their value, and even historians use such sources. As a rule, however, no matter how extensive a culture's physical remains might be, if it has not left us records we can read, its history largely remains a closed book.

Given the central role documents play in our reconstruction of the past, it should surprise no one to learn that most historians concentrate their research almost exclusively on written sources. Yet historians would be foolish to overlook *any* piece of evidence from the past. As suggested earlier, photographs could be a rich source for anyone researching the history of your class. That future historian might also want to study all of the extant souvenirs and supplies sold in your school's bookstore. Examined properly they could help fill in some gaps in the story of your class's cultural history.

Artifacts can be illuminating, particularly when used in conjunction with written records. Coins can tell us a lot about a society's ideals or its leaders' programs. Art in its many forms can reveal the interests, attitudes, and perceptions of various segments of society, from the elites to the masses. More down-to-earth items, such as domestic utensils and tools, allow us to infer quite a bit about the lives of common individuals. In this book we concentrate largely on written sources, for reasons already outlined. It would be wrong, however, if we totally overlooked artifacts. So, scattered throughout these chapters you will find important pieces of unwritten evidence. Let us look at an example and proceed to interpret it.

## The Family Dinner



### ▼ AN ANONYMOUS WOODCUT OF 1511

Columbus arrived in Barcelona in April 1493 to learn not only had his letter arrived, but it had already been published and publicly circulated. Within months the letter was translated into several languages; the Latin translation alone went through nine editions, several of which were lavishly illustrated, before the end of 1494. Printers discovered that educated Europeans had an almost insatiable





desire to learn about the peoples and lands Columbus and other explorers were discovering, and they catered to that interest. Their clientele wanted not only to read about the fascinating peoples, plants, and animals of these lands — they wanted also to see them. Consequently, as books on the new explorations proliferated, so did the number of printed illustrations. Many are fanciful and tell us more about the Europeans who created them than the peoples and regions they supposedly portrayed. The woodcut print we have chosen appeared in a popular English pamphlet of 1511.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What scene has the artist set? What has the artist placed to the immediate right of the standing man, and what function does it have in this scene?

2. What do each person's actions, dress, and demeanor tell us about her or him?
3. What does this illustration tell us about popular European notions concerning the natives of the New World?

### *Interpreting the Woodcut*

What a charming, even idyllic domestic scene! An attractive mother nurses an infant at her breast while amusing an older child with a feather. A well-muscled, equally attractive, and proud father stands nearby, holding the tools of his trade while next to him the family's dinner is slowly cooking. Dinner, of course, may strike us as macabre, as these are cannibals, and it looks like roast European is on the menu. The tools of the father's trade are weapons. Both children are naked, and the parents are virtually nude, save for what appear to be leaves that cover their loins, decorative necklaces, armbands and anklets of some indeterminate material, and feathers in their long and unkempt hair.

What is the message? What we have is a reprise of the image provided by Columbus in his letter of 1493: the *noble savage*. These are fully human beings with human bonds and affections. Yet they are still savages, as their clothing (or lack of it), decorations, hair styles, weapons, and choice of food would have suggested to most sixteenth-century Europeans. Here, as Columbus and many of those who followed agreed, were a people who could become Christians but who also, by virtue of their backwardness, were to be subjugated. There is something appealing about their innocent savagery, but what of that poor fellow whose severed leg and head are slowly roasting?

Have we read too much into the woodcut? It is arguable that we may have. The historian always faces this problem when trying to analyze an isolated piece of evidence, particularly a nonverbal source. Yet this artifact is not completely isolated, for we brought to its analysis insight gained from documentary evidence — Columbus's letter. That is how we generally read the artifacts of historical cultures. We attempt to place them in the context of what we have already learned or inferred from documentary sources. Documents illuminate artifacts, and artifacts make more vivid and tangible the often shadowy world of words.

As you attempt to interpret the unwritten sources in this book, keep in mind what you have learned from the documents you have already read, your textbook, and class lectures. Remember that we have chosen these artifacts to illustrate broad themes and general trends. You should not find their messages overly subtle. As with the documents, always try to place each piece of nonverbal evidence into its proper context, and in that regard, read the introductions and Questions for Analysis very carefully. We will do our best to provide you with all the information and clues you need.

Good luck and have fun!



## The Search for Eternal Life in Mesopotamia



### ▼ THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

Humans share many basic concerns, and among them two are of primary importance: finding meaning in life and confronting the reality of death. In Mesopotamia, where life and human fortune were so precarious, people deeply probed these issues and made them the subjects of numerous *myths*. The word *myth* derives from the ancient Greek word for “a poetic story.” As understood by modern scholars, however, myths are not just any poetic stories, and they certainly are not deliberate pieces of fiction or stories told primarily to entertain, even though myths do have entertainment value. First and foremost, myths are vehicles through which prescientific societies explain the workings of the universe and humanity’s place within it. Whereas the scientist objectifies nature, seeing the world as an *it*, the myth-maker lives in a world where everything has a soul, a personality, and its own story. A raging river is not a body of water responding to physical laws but an angry or capricious god. In the same manner, the fortunes of human society are not the consequences of chance, history, or any patterns discoverable by social scientists. Rather, the gods and other supernatural spirits intervene directly into human affairs, punishing and rewarding as they wish, and divine interventions become the subjects of mythic stories. The stories, in turn, provide insight into the ways of the gods, thereby largely satisfying the emotional and intellectual needs of the myth-maker’s audience.

So far as the issues of the meaning of life and death were concerned, ancient Mesopotamia created its classic mythic answer in the form of its greatest work of literature, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. An *epic* is a long narrative poem that celebrates the feats of some legendary hero who is involved in a journey or similar severe test. In the process of his trials, the hero gains wisdom and, because of that wisdom, greater heroic stature.

The most complete extant version of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* was discovered on twelve clay tablets in the ruins of an Assyrian library that dated to the late seventh century B.C.E. Other earlier versions of the epic, however, show that the story, at least in its basic outline, is Sumerian in origin and goes back to the third millennium B.C.E. (2000s).

The hero, Gilgamesh, was a historical figure who ruled the city-state of Uruk sometime between 2700 and 2500 B.C.E. and was remembered as a great warrior, as well as the builder of Uruk's massive walls and temple. His exploits were so impressive that he became the focal point of a series of oral sagas that recounted his legendary heroic deeds. Around 2000 B.C.E. an unknown Babylonian poet reworked some of these tales, along with other stories — such as the adventure of Utnapishtim that appears in our selection — into an epic masterpiece that became widely popular and influential throughout Southwest Asia and beyond.

\* The epic contains a profound theme, the conflict between humanity's talents and aspirations and its mortal limitations. Gilgamesh, "two-thirds a god and one-third human," as the poem describes him, is a man of heroic proportions and appetites who still must face the inevitability of death.

As the epic opens, an arrogant Gilgamesh, not yet aware of his human limitations and his duties as king, is exhausting the people of Uruk with his manic energy. The people cry to Heaven for relief from his abuse of power, and the gods respond by creating Enkidu, a wild man who lives among the animals. Enkidu enters Uruk, where he challenges Gilgamesh to a contest of strength and fighting skill. When Gilgamesh triumphs, Enkidu embraces him as a brother, and the two heroes set out on a series of spectacular exploits.

In the course of their heroic adventures, they insult Ishtar, goddess of love and fertility, and for this a life is owed. The one chosen by the gods to die is Enkidu. As our selection opens, Enkidu, after having cursed his heroic past, which has brought him to this fate, tells Gilgamesh of a vision he has had of the place Mesopotamians knew as "the land of no return."

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What was the Mesopotamian view of the afterlife?
2. What is the message of Siduri's advice to Gilgamesh?
3. Consider Utnapishtim's initial response to Gilgamesh's request for the secret of eternal life. How does his message complement what Siduri has said?
4. Consider the story of Utnapishtim. What do the various actions of the gods and goddesses allow us to infer about how the Mesopotamians viewed their deities?



5. According to the epic, what are the respective roles of the gods and humans? What do the Mesopotamian deities require of humanity? What do humans expect of their gods?
6. What wisdom has Gilgamesh gained from his epic struggles? How has he changed as a result of his quest?
7. Despite the apparent failure of his quest for eternal life, has Gilgamesh earned a type of immortality? If so, what is it? *he is a legendary figure*
8. Review your answers to questions 2 and 3 in light of the epilogue, where the poet lays out for us the moral of the story. Basing your answer on the entire story, and especially the epilogue, what would you say was the Mesopotamian view of the meaning of life?

As Enkidu slept alone in his sickness, in bitterness of spirit he poured out his heart to his friend. "It was I who cut down the cedar, I who leveled the forest, I who slew Humbaba<sup>1</sup> and now see what has become of me. Listen, my friend, this is the dream I dreamed last night. The heavens roared, and earth rumbled back an answer; between them stood I before an awful being, the sombre-faced manbird; he had directed on me his purpose. His was a vampire face, his foot was a lion's foot, his hand was an eagle's talon. He fell on me and his claws were in my hair, he held me fast and I smothered; then he transformed me so that my arms became wings covered with feathers. He turned his stare towards me, and he led me away to the palace of Irkalla, the Queen of Darkness,<sup>2</sup> to the house from which none who enters ever returns, down the road from which there is no coming back.

"There is the house whose people sit in darkness; dust is their food and clay their meat. They are clothed like birds with wings for covering, they see no light, they sit in darkness. I entered the house of dust and I saw the kings of the earth, their crowns put away forever; rulers and princes, all those who once wore kingly crowns and ruled the world in the days of old. They who had stood in the place of the gods like Anu and Enlil,<sup>3</sup> stood now like servants to

fetch baked meats in the house of dust, to carry cooked meat and cold water from the waterskin. In the house of dust which I entered were high priests and acolytes, priests of the incantation and of ecstasy; there were servers of the temple, and there was Etana, that king of Kish whom the eagle carried to heaven in the days of old.<sup>4</sup> There was Ereshkigal<sup>5</sup> the Queen of the Underworld; and Belit-Sheri squatted in front of her, she who is recorder of the gods and keeps the book of death. She held a tablet from which she read. She raised her head, she saw me and spoke: 'Who has brought this one here?' Then I awoke like a man drained of blood who wanders alone in a waste of rushes; like one whom the bailiff has seized and his heart pounds with terror."

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▷ Enkidu dies, and Gilgamesh now realizes that heroic fame is no substitute for life. Facing the reality of his own death, he begins a desperate search for immortality. In the course of his search he meets Siduri, a goddess of wine, who advises him:

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"Gilgamesh, where are you hurrying to? You will never find that life for which you are looking. When the gods created man they allotted to him death, but life they retained in their own keeping. As for you, Gilgamesh, fill your belly

<sup>1</sup>The giant who guarded the cedar forest and was slain by Enkidu and Gilgamesh.

<sup>2</sup>Goddess of the Underworld.

<sup>3</sup>Dead earthly kings. Anu was the supreme king of the gods

and the source of all order and government; Enlil was the storm god, who supported royal authority.

<sup>4</sup>A legendary king of the Sumerian city of Kish.

<sup>5</sup>Another name for Irkalla, goddess of the Underworld.

with good things; day and night, night and day, dance and be merry, feast and rejoice. Let your clothes be fresh, bathe yourself in water, cherish the little child that holds your hand, and make your wife happy in your embrace; for this too is the lot of man."

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- ▷ Gilgamesh, however, refuses to be deflected from his quest. After a series of harrowing experiences, he finally reaches Utnapishtim, a former mortal whom the gods had placed in an eternal paradise, and addresses him.
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"Oh, father Utnapishtim, you who have entered the assembly of the gods, I wish to question you concerning the living and the dead, how shall I find the life for which I am searching?"

Utnapishtim said, "There is no permanence. Do we build a house to stand forever, do we seal a contract to hold for all time? Do brothers divide an inheritance to keep forever, does the flood-time of rivers endure? It is only the nymph of the dragon-fly who sheds her larva and sees the sun in his glory. From the days of old there is no permanence. The sleeping and the dead, how alike they are, they are like a painted death. What is there between the master and the servant when both have fulfilled their doom? When the Anunnaki,<sup>6</sup> the judges, come together, and Mammethun<sup>7</sup> the mother of destinies, together they decree the fates of men. Life and death they allot but the day of death they do not disclose."

Then Gilgamesh said to Utnapishtim the Faraway, "I look at you now, Utnapishtim, and your appearance is no different from mine; there is nothing strange in your features. I thought I should find you like a hero prepared for battle, but you lie here taking your ease on your back. Tell me truly, how was it that you came to enter the company of the gods and to possess everlasting life?" Utnapishtim said to Gilgamesh, "I will

reveal to you a mystery, I will tell you a secret of the gods."

"You know the city Shuruppak, it stands on the banks of Euphrates? That city grew old and the gods that were in it were old. There was Anu, lord of the firmament, their father, and warrior Enlil their counselor, Ninurta<sup>8</sup> the helper, and Ennugi<sup>9</sup> watcher over canals; and with them also was Ea.<sup>10</sup> In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the great god was aroused by the clamor. Enlil heard the clamor and he said to the gods in council, 'The uproar of mankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel.' So the gods agreed to exterminate mankind. Enlil did this, but Ea because of his oath<sup>11</sup> warned me in a dream. He whispered their words to my house of reeds, 'Reed-house, reed-house! Wall, O wall, hearken reed-house, wall reflect; O man of Shuruppak, son of Ubara-Tutu; tear down your house and build a boat, abandon possessions and look for life, despise worldly goods and save your soul alive. Tear down your house, I say, and build a boat. . . . Then take up into the boat the seed of all living creatures.'

"When I had understood I said to my lord, 'Behold, what you have commanded I will honor and perform, but how shall I answer the people, the city, the elders?' Then Ea opened his mouth and said to me, his servant, 'Tell them this: I have learnt that Enlil is wrathful against me, I dare no longer walk in his land nor live in his city; I will go down to the Gulf to dwell with Ea my lord. But on you he will rain down abundance, rare fish and shy wildfowl, a rich harvest-tide. In the evening the rider of the storm will bring you wheat in torrents.' . . .

"On the seventh day the boat was complete. . . .

"I loaded into her all that I had of gold and of living things, my family, my kin, the beast of the field both wild and tame, and all the crafts-

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<sup>6</sup>Gods of the Underworld who judge the dead.

<sup>7</sup>Goddess of fate.

<sup>8</sup>God of war.

<sup>9</sup>God of irrigation.

<sup>10</sup>God of wisdom and providence.

<sup>11</sup>Apparently an oath to protect humanity, because Ea was the god of life-giving water and good fortune.



men. I sent them on board. . . . The time was fulfilled, the evening came, the rider of the storm sent down the rain. I looked out at the weather and it was terrible, so I too boarded the boat and battened her down. . . .

"For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world, tempest and flood raged together like warring hosts. When the seventh day dawned the storm from the south subsided, the sea grew calm, the flood was stilled; I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all mankind was turned to clay. The surface of the sea stretched as flat as a roof-top; I opened a hatch and the light fell on my face. Then I bowed low, I sat down and I wept, the tears streamed down my face, for on every side was the waste of water. I looked for land in vain, but fourteen leagues distant there appeared a mountain, and there the boat grounded; on the mountain of Nisir the boat held fast, she held fast and did not budge. . . . When the seventh day dawned I loosed a dove and let her go. She flew away, but finding no resting-place she returned. Then I loosed a swallow, and she flew away but finding no resting-place she returned. I loosed a raven, she saw that the waters had retreated, she ate, she flew around, she cawed, and she did not come back. Then I threw everything open to the four winds, I made a sacrifice and poured out a libation<sup>12</sup> on the mountain top. Seven and again seven cauldrons I set up on their stands, I heaped up wood and cane and cedar and myrtle. When the gods smelled the sweet savor, they gathered like flies over the sacrifice.<sup>13</sup> Then, at last, Ishtar also came, she lifted her necklace with the jewels of heaven that once Anu had made to please her. 'O you gods here present, by the lapis lazuli round my neck I shall remember these days as I remember the jewels of my throat; these last days I shall not forget.'<sup>14</sup> Let all the gods gather round the sacrifice, except Enlil. He shall not approach this

offering, for without reflection he brought the flood; he consigned my people to destruction.'

"When Enlil had come, when he saw the boat, he was wrath and swelled with anger at the gods, the host of heaven, 'Has any of these mortals escaped? Not one was to have survived the destruction.' Then the god of the wells and canals Ninurta opened his mouth and said to the warrior Enlil, 'Who is there of the gods that can devise without Ea? It is Ea alone who knows all things.' Then Ea opened his mouth and spoke to warrior Enlil, 'Wisest of gods, hero Enlil, how could you so senselessly bring down the flood?' . . . It was not that I revealed the secret of the gods; the wise man learned it in a dream. Now take your counsel what shall be done with him.

"Then Enlil went up into the boat, he took me by the hand and my wife and made us enter the boat and kneel down on either side, he standing between us. He touched our foreheads to bless us saying, 'In time past Utnapishtim was a mortal man; henceforth he and his wife shall live in the distance at the mouth of the rivers.' Thus it was that the gods took me and placed me here to live in the distance, at the mouth of the rivers."

Utnapishtim said, "As for you, Gilgamesh, who will assemble the gods for your sake, so that you may find that life for which you are searching?"

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- ▷ After telling his story, Utnapishtim challenges Gilgamesh to resist sleep for six days and seven nights. When Gilgamesh fails the test, Utnapishtim points out how preposterous it is to search for immortality when one cannot even resist sleep. Out of kindness, Utnapishtim does tell Gilgamesh where he can find a submarine plant that will at least rejuvenate him. Consequently, the hero dives to the bottom of the sea and plucks it. However, humanity is to be denied even the blessing of forestalling old age and decrepitude, because the plant is stolen from Gilgamesh by a serpent. His mission a failure, Gilgamesh returns to Uruk.
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<sup>12</sup>Poured out wine or some other beverage as an offering to the gods.

<sup>13</sup>Many myth-making people believe that the gods gain nourishment from the greasy smoke of burnt sacrifices.

<sup>14</sup>The necklace is a rainbow.

The destiny was fulfilled which the father of the gods, Enlil of the mountain, had decreed for Gilgamesh: "In nether-earth the darkness will show him a light: of mankind, all that are known, none will leave a monument for generations to come to compare with his. The heroes, the wise men, like the new moon have their waxing and waning. Men will say, 'Who has ever ruled with might and with power like him?' As in the dark month, the month of shadows, so without him there is no light. O Gilgamesh, this was the meaning of your dream. You were given the kingship, such was your destiny, everlasting life was not your destiny. Because of this do not be sad at heart, do not be grieved or oppressed; he has given you power to bind and to loose, to be the

darkness and the light of mankind. He has given unexampled supremacy over the people, victory in battle from which no fugitive returns, in forays and assaults from which there is no going back. But do not abuse this power, deal justly with your servants in the palace, deal justly before the face of the Sun." . . .

Gilgamesh, the son of Ninsun, lies in the tomb. At the place of offerings he weighed the bread-offering, at the place of libation he poured out the wine. In those days the lord Gilgamesh departed, the son of Ninsun, the king, peerless, without an equal among men, who did not neglect Enlil his master. O Gilgamesh, lord of Kullab,<sup>15</sup> great is thy praise.

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<sup>15</sup>Part of Uruk.





## The Mandate of Heaven



### ▼ *THE CLASSIC OF HISTORY*

The *Shu Jing*, or *The Classic of History*, is the oldest complete work among what are known as the five Confucian Classics. (The introduction to source 24 in Chapter 4 contains a biography of Confucius, and note 6 of source 35 in Chapter 5 describes the Classics.) The five Classics were canonized as the basic elements of the Confucian educational system during the second century B.C.E., when the books were reconstructed by order of several emperors of the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.). Although Han scholars probably refashioned elements of the *Shu Jing*, the work was already ancient in Confucius' day, and the book, as we have received it, is probably essentially the same text that Confucius (?551–479? B.C.E.) knew, studied, and accepted as an authentic record of Chinese civilization.

Despite its title, *The Classic of History* is not a work of historical interpretation or narration. Rather, it is a collection of documents spanning some seventeen hundred years of Chinese history and legend, from 2357 to 631 B.C.E. Many of the documents, however, are the spurious creations of much later periods and therefore reflect the attitudes of those subsequent eras.



The document that appears here was composed in the age of Zhou but purports to be the advice given by the faithful Yi Yin to King Tai Jia, second of the Shang kings. According to the story behind the document, when the first Shang king, Zheng Tang, died around 1753, his chief minister Yi Yin took it upon himself to instruct the new, young king in the ways and duties of kingship and the workings of the *Mandate of Heaven*.

\* The Mandate of Heaven was a political-social philosophy that served as the basic Chinese explanation for the success and failure of monarchs and states down to the end of the empire in 1912 C.E. Whenever a dynasty fell, the reason invariably offered by China's sages was that it had lost the moral right to rule, which is given by Heaven alone. In this context, Heaven did not mean a personal god but a cosmic, all-pervading power. The theory of the Mandate of Heaven was probably created by the Zhou and used to justify their overthrow of the Shang. The king, after all, was the father of his people, and paternal authority was the basic cement of Chinese society from earliest times. Rebellion against a father, therefore, needed extraordinary justification.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What virtues and values does this document extol?
2. How does a monarch lose the Mandate of Heaven, and what are the consequences of this loss?
3. What evidence can you find to support the conclusion that Chinese political philosophers perceived the state as an extended family?
4. Would Yi Yin accept the notion that one must distinguish between a ruler's private morality and public policies?
5. What does the theory of the Mandate of Heaven suggest about the nature of Chinese society?
6. Modern politicians often promise "innovative answers to the challenges of tomorrow." What would Yi Yin think about such an approach to statecraft? What would Yi Yin think about modern politicians who attempt to appear youthful? What would he think of popular opinion polls?
7. Compare the Chinese vision of its ideal monarch with Egyptian and Mesopotamian views of kingship. Despite their obvious cultural differences, did each of these societies expect its king to perform essentially the same task? If so, what was that task?

In the twelfth month of the first year . . . Yi Yin sacrificed to the former king, and presented the heir-king reverently before the shrine of his grandfather. All the princes from the domain of the nobles and the royal domain were present;

all the officers also, each continuing to discharge his particular duties, were there to receive the orders of the chief minister. Yi Yin then clearly described the complete virtue of the Meritorious Ancestor<sup>1</sup> for the instruction of the young king.

<sup>1</sup>Zheng Tang, founder of the Shang Dynasty.

He said, "Oh! of old the former kings of Xia cultivated earnestly their virtue, and then there were no calamities from Heaven. The spirits of the hills and rivers likewise were all in tranquillity; and the birds and beasts, the fishes and tortoises, all enjoyed their existence according to their nature. But their descendant did not follow their example, and great Heaven sent down calamities, employing the agency of our ruler<sup>2</sup> who was in possession of its favoring appointment. The attack on Xia may be traced to the orgies in Ming Tiao.<sup>3</sup> . . . Our king of Shang brilliantly displayed his sagely prowess; for oppression he substituted his generous gentleness; and the millions of the people gave him their hearts. Now your Majesty is entering on the inheritance of his virtue; — all depends on how you commence your reign. To set up love, it is for you to love your relations; to set up respect, it is for you to respect your elders. The commencement is in the family and the state. . . .

"Oh! the former king began with careful attention to the bonds that hold men together. He listened to expostulation, and did not seek to resist it; he conformed to the wisdom of the ancients; occupying the highest position, he displayed intelligence; occupying an inferior position, he displayed his loyalty; he allowed the good qualities of the men whom he employed and did not seek that they should have every talent. . . .

"He extensively sought out wise men, who

should be helpful to you, his descendant and heir. He laid down the punishments for officers, and warned those who were in authority, saying, 'If you dare to have constant dancing in your palaces, and drunken singing in your chambers, — that is called the fashion of sorcerers; if you dare to set your hearts on wealth and women, and abandon yourselves to wandering about or to the chase, — that is called the fashion of extravagance; if you dare to despise sage words, to resist the loyal and upright, to put far from you the aged and virtuous, and to seek the company of . . . youths, — that is called the fashion of disorder. Now if a high noble or officer be addicted to one of these three fashions with their ten evil ways, his family will surely come to ruin; if the prince of a country be so addicted, his state will surely come to ruin. The minister who does not try to correct such vices in the sovereign shall be punished with branding.' . . .

"Oh! do you, who now succeed to the throne, revere these warnings in your person. Think of them! — sacred counsels of vast importance, admirable words forcibly set forth! The ways of Heaven are not invariable: — on the good-doer it sends down all blessings, and on the evil-doer it sends down all miseries. Do you but be virtuous, be it in small things or in large, and the myriad regions will have cause for rejoicing. If you not be virtuous, be it in large things or in small, it will bring the ruin of your ancestral temple."

<sup>2</sup>Zheng Tang (see note 1).

<sup>3</sup>According to legend, Jie, the last Xia king, held notorious orgies at Ming Tiao.

## The Search for Eternal Life in Egypt



### ▼ *THREE FUNERARY TEXTS*

Historians have traditionally divided the first two thousand years of Egyptian civilization into six ages: the Early Dynastic Period (ca. 3100–2600 B.C.E.); the Old Kingdom (ca. 2600–2125); the First Intermediate Period (ca. 2125–2025); the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2060–1700); the Second Intermediate Period, or Age of the Hyksos (ca. 1700–1550); and the New Kingdom, or Empire (ca. 1550–1069).

The Early Dynastic Period was Egypt's era of initial unification and state-building under the guidance of its first three royal dynasties. The Old Kingdom that followed centered on Egypt's god-kings, whose mummified remains were reverently entombed in pyramids in preparation for the journey to eternal life in the *Land of the West*. During this age, Egyptians believed (or at least the priests taught) that immortality was the exclusive preserve of the divine pharaoh, members of the royal family, the priests, and a handful of favored royal servants. They further



believed that in order to ensure the king's safe journey to the afterlife, all that was needed was proper attention to the many details of the royal funeral ceremony. Beginning with the entombment of King Unas, who died around 2345 B.C.E., Egyptians carved magical incantations on the walls of royal burial chambers as a means of assuring the king's safe journey into eternal life. Modern scholars have discovered and catalogued over 750 distinct incantations, which they term collectively the *Pyramid Texts*. We do not know what the Egyptians called them, but regardless, they provide a privileged view of funeral practices and beliefs regarding immortality during the Old Kingdom. Our first selection comes from the tomb of King Teti, who followed Unas to the throne.

Egyptians continued to bury their dead with great ceremony for thousands of years, but it was essentially only during the Old Kingdom that they constructed the great burial pyramids, which for over forty-five hundred years have served as tokens of the power wielded by early Egypt's god-kings. The reign of Pepi II (ca. 2275–2185 B.C.E.) marked the end of the Old Kingdom. Shortly after Pepi's death, pharaonic power collapsed, plunging Egypt into an era of internal turmoil known as the First Intermediate Period. A century later this age of local rule and social upheaval gave way to the Middle Kingdom, an era of revived central authority and a deepening awareness of social justice and personal moral responsibility. Befitting the new spirit, many Egyptians came to view eternal life as available to all Egyptians who met certain criteria.

A new body of funerary inscriptions now appeared, which scholars today refer to as the *Coffin Texts*. The texts, usually inscribed within the wooden coffins of people who could afford elaborate funerals, were ritual resurrection spells. Some were modeled upon the earlier *Pyramid Texts*, but most were quite new and displayed an obsession with the dangers of Earth and the terrors of death that was lacking in the pyramid inscriptions. Despite the essential life-affirming nature of their culture, Egyptians were not immune to the miseries and fears, especially fear of disaster and death, that beset all humans.

Our second selection is a much-used coffin spell that takes the form of a two-part speech. In the first part the sun-god *Re* speaks, reminding humanity of his four good deeds at the time of creation. In the second part the deceased speaks, laying his claim on eternal life.

The process of widening access to the afterlife evolved to another level with the creation of *The Book of the Dead*. This is actually the modern name for a collection of papyrus texts that the Egyptians knew as *The Chapters for Coming Forth by Day*. Although it did not reach its final form until around the sixth century B.C.E., this collection of chapters was largely a creation of the New Kingdom. Like the pyramid and coffin inscriptions from which it evolved, it was a body of magical incantations for use in burial ceremonies, but unlike the pyramid and coffin inscriptions, it had a fairly standardized text. It was also available to a larger but still necessarily prosperous clientele. Divided into more than 150 chapters, which were gathered together into papyrus scrolls, the book had a certain mass-produced quality. One could purchase a scroll, fill in the name of the deceased, and bury it with the person's body. Resurrection had become a cut-rate enterprise.

Of all the chapters, the most famous is Chapter 125, the lengthy “Judgment of the Dead,” from which we have extracted *The Negative Confession*. The scene is the Hall of the Two Truths, or the Double Ma’at, where *Osiris*, king of the Underworld, presides over an assembly of forty-two minor deities. It is these forty-two who judge the deceased’s suitability to become an eternally blessed spirit. Upon entering the hall, the deceased (N, or fill in the name) proclaims her or his purity.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are the underlying assumptions of King Teti’s pyramid text?
2. According to the coffin text, how does a person guarantee eternal life?
3. Consider the speech of Re. Does it contain a moral element? If so, how is that message connected, if at all, with the dead person’s spell?
4. One scholar has written of the coffin texts: “Because the individuals who were seeking an afterlife as divine beings stood outside of the royal circle, their coffin inscriptions reflected both paranoid fear and delusions of grandeur.” Do you agree or disagree?
5. What does *The Negative Confession* allow us to infer about Egyptian values in the New Kingdom?
6. Each of the three texts provides a path to eternal life. What do their similarities and differences suggest about continuities and changes within Egyptian society over this millennium?
7. Compare these three texts with *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. What are their different messages? What do those messages suggest about the differences between the two civilizations?

### A PYRAMID TEXT

Oho! Oho! Rise up, O Teti!  
 Take your head,  
 Collect your bones,  
 Gather your limbs,  
 Shake the earth from your flesh!  
 Take your bread that rots not,  
 Your beer that sours not,  
 Stand at the gates that bar the  
     common people!  
 The gatekeeper comes out to you,  
 He grasps your hand,  
 Takes you into heaven, to your father Geb.<sup>1</sup>

He rejoices at your coming,  
 Gives you his hands,  
 Kisses you, caresses you,  
 Sets you before the spirits, the  
     imperishable stars.  
 The hidden ones worship you,  
 The great ones surround you,  
 The watchers wait on you.  
 Barley is threshed for you,  
 Emmen is reaped for you,  
 Your monthly feasts are made with it,  
 Your half-month feasts are made with it,  
 As ordered done for you by Geb, your father,  
 Rise up, O Teti, you shall not die!

<sup>1</sup>The god of the Earth and father of Osiris, the god of resurrection and king of the dead.

## A COFFIN TEXT

Words spoken by Him-whose-names-are-hidden, the All-Lord, as he speaks before those who silence the storm, in the sailing of the court:<sup>2</sup>

Hail in peace! I repeat to you the good deeds which my own heart did for me from within the serpent-coil,<sup>3</sup> in order to silence strife. I did four good deeds within the portal of lightland:

I made the four winds, that every man might breathe in his time. This is one of the deeds.

I made the great inundation,<sup>4</sup> that the humble might benefit by it like the great. This is one of the deeds.

I made every man like his fellow; and I did not command that they do wrong. It is their hearts that disobey what I have said. This is one of the deeds.

I made that their hearts are not disposed to forget the West,<sup>5</sup> in order that sacred offerings be made to the gods of the nomes.<sup>6</sup> This is one of the deeds.

I have created the gods from my sweat, and the people from the tears of my eye.

*The Dead Speaks*

I<sup>7</sup> shall shine and be seen every day as a dignitary of the All-Lord, having given satisfaction to the Weary-hearted.<sup>8</sup>

I shall sail rightly in my bark,<sup>9</sup> I am lord of eternity in the crossing of the sky.

I am not afraid in my limbs, for Hu and Hike<sup>10</sup> overthrow for me that evil being.

I shall see lightland, I shall dwell in it. I shall judge the poor and the wealthy.

I shall do the same for the evil-doers; for mine is life, I am its lord, and the scepter will not be taken from me.

I have spent a million years with the Weary-hearted, the son of Geb, dwelling with him in one place; while hills became towns and towns hills, for dwelling destroys dwelling.

I am lord of the flame who lives on truth; lord of eternity, maker of joy, against whom that worm shall not rebel.

I am he who is in his shrine, master of action who destroys the storm; who drives off the serpents of many names when he goes from his shrine.

Lord of the winds who announces the north-wind, rich in names in the mouth of the Ennead.<sup>11</sup>

Lord of lightland, maker of light, who lights the sky with his beauty.

I am he in his name! Make way for me, that I may see Nun<sup>12</sup> and Amun!<sup>13</sup> For I am that equipped spirit who passes by the guards.<sup>14</sup> They do not speak for fear of Him-whose-name-is-hidden, who is in my body. I know him, I do not ignore him! I am equipped and effective in opening his portal!

As for any person who knows this spell, he will be like Re in the eastern sky, like Osiris in the netherworld. He will go down to the circle of fire, without the flame touching him ever!

<sup>2</sup>The deities who accompany Re as he sails daily across the sky (note 9).

<sup>3</sup>The serpent-dragon Apophis, a mythic symbol of the lurking dangers in the world.

<sup>4</sup>The annual flooding of the Nile.

<sup>5</sup>The Land of the Resurrected Dead.

<sup>6</sup>The forty-two religious and administrative districts into which Egypt was divided. Note that the dead person is being judged by forty-two deities.

<sup>7</sup>The dead person now becomes the speaker, assuming the identity of Re.

<sup>8</sup>One of Osiris's titles. One must first satisfy Osiris before joining Re.

<sup>9</sup>Re sails across the sky in a bark, or boat.

<sup>10</sup>Personifications of effective speech and magic, they are probably a reference to this magical spell, which has been uttered at entombment and carved in the coffin.

<sup>11</sup>The company of Egypt's nine chief deities.

<sup>12</sup>The watery void outside the temporal and spatial boundaries of creation from which the creator emerged, Nun was personified as the god of the Abyss.

<sup>13</sup>A primeval god who existed as a force before creation, he became the chief god of Thebes. He rose to preeminence in Egypt when the princes of Thebes reunited Egypt after the Second Intermediate Period (see source 4, note 1).

<sup>14</sup>The guards to the Land of the West.



## THE NEGATIVE CONFESSION

(1) To be said on reaching the Hall of the Two Truths<sup>15</sup> so as to purge N of any sins committed and to see the face of every god:

Hail to you, Great God, Lord of the  
Two Truths!

I have come to you, my Lord,  
I was brought to see your beauty.  
I know you, I know the names of the forty-  
two gods,

Who are with you in the Hall of the  
Two Truths.

Who live by warding off evildoers,  
Who drink of their blood,  
On that day of judging characters  
before Wennofer.<sup>16</sup>

Lo, your name is "He-of-Two-Daughters,"  
(And) "He-of-Ma'at's-Two-Eyes."

Lo, I come before you,  
Bringing Ma'at to you,  
Having repelled evil for you.

I have not done crimes against people,  
I have not mistreated cattle,  
I have not sinned in the Place of Truth.<sup>17</sup>  
I have not known what should not  
be known,<sup>18</sup>

I have not done any harm.  
I did not begin a day by exacting more than  
my due,

My name did not reach the bark of the  
mighty ruler.<sup>19</sup>

I have not blasphemed a god,  
I have not robbed the poor.  
I have not done what the god abhors,  
I have not maligned a servant to his master.  
I have not caused pain,

I have not caused tears.  
I have not killed,  
I have not ordered to kill,  
I have not made anyone suffer.  
I have not damaged the offerings in  
the temples,  
I have not depleted the loaves of the gods,  
I have not stolen the cakes of the dead,<sup>20</sup>  
I have not copulated nor defiled myself.  
I have not increased nor reduced  
the measure, . . .

I have not cheated in the fields.  
I have not added to the weight of  
the balance,  
I have not falsified the plummet of  
the scales.  
I have not taken milk from the mouth  
of children,  
I have not deprived cattle of their pasture.  
I have not snared birds in the reeds of  
the gods,  
I have not caught fish in their ponds.  
I have not held back water in its season,  
I have not dammed a flowing stream,  
I have not quenched a needed fire.  
I have not neglected the days of  
meat offerings,  
I have not detained cattle belonging to  
the god,  
I have not stopped a god in his procession.

I am pure, I am pure,  
I am pure, I am pure! . . .  
No evil shall befall me in this land,  
In this Hall of the Two Truths;  
For I know the names of the gods in it,  
The followers of the great God!

<sup>15</sup>Ma'at takes a dual form here in Isis, goddess of right, and Nephthys, goddess of truth. Isis was the sister and wife of Osiris. It was she who brought the dead and dismembered Osiris back to life, thereby assuring his status as god of resurrection and king of the Underworld. Nephthys, also Osiris's sister, had assisted in his resurrection.

<sup>16</sup>One of Osiris's names.

<sup>17</sup>He has not sinned in any holy place.

<sup>18</sup>Secrets of the gods.

<sup>19</sup>As he sails across the sky in his bark, Re has not heard of any misdeeds by the deceased.

<sup>20</sup>Food to accompany the dead on their journey.

## A Journey to the Underworld



### ▼ *Homer, THE ODYSSEY*

By 1600 B.C.E. history's first identifiable Greeks, a people who called themselves the *Achaeans*, had created in the Balkan Peninsula a decentralized warrior civilization, which we term *Mycenaean*. The name derives from *Mycenae*, a city that exercised a loose leadership over the petty principalities of southern and central Greece. Around 1450 B.C.E. the Achaeans were masters of the island civilization of Crete and, as accomplished pirates and maritime merchants, a major force in the eastern Mediterranean. It is against this background that we must place the

Achaean expedition against *Troy*, a city in Anatolia, which took place around 1200.

The sack of rival Troy was the high-water mark for the Achaeans. Within a century Mycenaean civilization was collapsing, in part, at least, because of internecine wars among the various Achaean principalities. What other factors were involved remain a mystery. By 1100 B.C.E. the highly specialized arts and crafts, including literacy, that had characterized Bronze Age Greece at its height had disappeared or were severely reduced in quality and quantity. Greece had entered a period we call the *Greek Dark Age* (ca. 1100–ca. 800), a term that, more than anything else, implies our overall ignorance of what was happening in the Greek World during these centuries. About all we can say with any degree of certainty is that the Greeks lost the art of writing, their political and economic structures seem to have been drastically reduced in size, and a relatively weak and impoverished Greek World ceased to be a major power in the eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, however, recent archeological finds have tended to underscore the continuities between late Mycenaean society and the classical *Hellenic World* that arose after 800 B.C.E., despite the losses and retrenchments. What is more, during this so-called Dark Age the Greek *polis*, or city-state, emerged as a major (many would say *the* major) component of Greek civilization. By 800 B.C.E., *poleis* (the plural of *polis*) were scattered all over the Greek World.

When Greek civilization (with its accompanying literacy) reemerged around the middle of the eighth century B.C.E., it was centered along the western shores of Anatolia, where Greek colonists had begun settling around the mid eleventh century B.C.E. Because so many of these Greek refugees spoke a Greek dialect known as *Ionian*, the region became known as *Ionia*. Here across the Aegean Sea, Greek settlers, benefiting from their contact with the far-older civilizations of Southwest Asia (and, to a lesser extent, Egypt), produced the first Greek literature known to us (as opposed to the bureaucratic lists left behind by Mycenaean civilization). Of all of this early literature, the most significant are two epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, both ascribed to a bard called *Homer*.

The ancients had no doubt there was a historical Homer, a blind poet who created both works. Modern scholars are less certain, and most would agree that we will never know the truth about Homer's identity or the exact process by which his epics were fashioned. Yet, there are some points on which scholars are generally agreed. Internal evidence (the words, phrases, and allusions within each poem) has led most researchers to agree that, regardless of whether Homer was one, two, or many poets, these two poems largely reached their final form in Anatolia during the late eighth century. Whether they were written down that early or transmitted orally is impossible to say. What is clear, however, is that both epics exhibit all of the hallmarks of oral poetry, suggesting strongly that in the act of creation the poet or poets whom we call Homer drew heavily from a long tradition of oral poetic stories, which had been preserved for centuries in the memories of wandering professional bards.

Very much like the *Rig Veda*, therefore, the Homeric epics preserve vestiges of a much earlier age — in this case the Late Mycenaean Age — but are also overlaid with the values, social practices, and modes of perception of later Greek society. When used judiciously, the two epics tell us a good deal about life in the thirteenth



century B.C.E. — the age of the Trojan War. At the same time, they often reflect the culture of Late Dark Age society, especially that of the ninth and eighth centuries. The problem facing the historian is to separate one from the other.

On one level both poems celebrate such warrior virtues as personal honor, bravery, and loyalty to one's comrades, and on a deeper level they probe the hidden recesses of human motivation and emotion. On a third level the poems address the issue of the meaning of human suffering. Why do humans experience pain and sorrow? Are they captive to the whims of the gods? Are they and the gods subject to an overarching destiny that neither can avoid?

More to human scale than the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* tells two intertwined stories. One traces the ten-year-long homeward voyage of the Achaean hero *Odysseus*. This clever adventurer has to battle, with cunning and skill, the enmity of Poseidon, god of the sea, and a variety of superhuman opponents before finally arriving home to his island kingdom of Ithaca. The second story details the attempts of Odysseus's wife and son, Penelope and Telemachus, who, with equal cunning and skill, attempt to stall indefinitely the advances of a group of suitors who seek to marry the presumed widow. As the suitors impatiently wait to see whom she will marry, they despoil Odysseus and Penelope's home and waste Telemachus's patrimony. The two story lines merge when Odysseus returns and, with the aid of his son and several loyal servants, wreaks vengeance on the suitors by killing them all. Unlike most epics, the story ends happily with Penelope and Odysseus reunited and Telemachus assured of his inheritance.

The following selection describes one of Odysseus's most daring adventures on his troubled homeward journey — a visit to the House of Hades, or the Land of the Dead. Here he consults Teiresias, the blind Theban seer, who even in death retains his prophetic powers. Odysseus also meets the shades of many famous women and men, including his old comrade-in-arms Achilles, the Achaeans' greatest warrior and the central character of the *Iliad*, who was killed prior to the fall of Troy.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What values did Odysseus's society hold in highest esteem?
2. How does Homer address the issue of human responsibility for ill fortune?
3. Is there a destiny that humans cannot escape? If so, what role do the gods play in this destiny?
4. It is often stated that the Greeks focused on human beings and human concerns. Indeed, it is said that for the Greeks the human was the standard of measurement for all things. Does this selection seem to support or contradict that judgment?
5. Compare Achilles' sentiment toward the land of the dead with Enkidu's vision in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (source 1). What do you conclude from your analysis?
6. Compare Achaean society with that of the Aryans. What strikes you as more significant, the similarities or the differences? What do you conclude from your answer?

Now the spirit of Teiresias of Thebes came forward, bearing a golden staff in his hand. Knowing who I am, he addressed me: "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus,<sup>1</sup> Odysseus, known for your many wives, why, unhappy man, have you left the sunlight to behold the dead in this cheerless region? Step back from the trench and put aside your sharp sword so that I might drink the blood<sup>2</sup> and thereby prophesy the truth to you." Thus he spoke. I, stepping backward, drove my silver-studded sword into its scabbard. When he had drunk the black blood, this noble prophet addressed me with these words.

"Lord Odysseus, you seek a honey-sweet homeward journey, but a god will make your travels difficult. I do not think you can escape the notice of the Earth-shaker,<sup>3</sup> who has set his mind in enmity against you, enraged because you blinded his beloved son.<sup>4</sup> Even so, you still might be able to reach home, although in sorry circumstances, if you are willing to restrain your desires, and those of your comrades, beginning when your seaworthy ship leaves the deep blue waters and approaches the island of Thrinacie,<sup>5</sup> where you will see the grazing cattle and fat sheep of Helios,<sup>6</sup> who sees and hears everything. If you leave the animals untouched and concentrate solely on getting home, it is possible that all of you might reach Ithaca, although in sorry circumstances. If you injure these animals, however, I foresee destruction for your ship and its crew, and even if you yourself manage to escape, you will return home late, in a sorry state, in an alien ship, having lost all your companions.<sup>7</sup> And

even there at home you will find troubles. Overbearing men will be consuming your wealth, wooing your goddesslike wife, and offering her bridal gifts. Certainly, following your arrival, you will gain revenge on these suitors for their evil deeds. When you have slain the suitors in your halls, whether by stratagem or in an open fight with sharp bronze weapons, you must again set out on a journey. You must take a well-fashioned oar and travel until you reach a people who are ignorant of the sea and never eat food mixed with salt, and who know nothing about our purple-ribbed ships and the well-fashioned oars that serve as ships wings. And I say you will receive a sign, a very clear one that you cannot miss. When another traveler upon meeting you remarks that you are carrying a winnowing-fan across your broad back,<sup>8</sup> plant your well-fashioned oar in the earth and offer Lord Poseidon the sacrifice of a ram, a bull,<sup>9</sup> and a boar, the mate of the wild she-swine. Then return home and there make sacred offerings to all the immortal gods who inhabit wide heaven, and do so to each in order of rank. As for death, it will come to you at last gently out of the sea in a comfortable old age when you are surrounded by a prosperous people. This I tell you truly." . . .

Next came the spirits of Achilles, son of Peleus, of Patroclus,<sup>10</sup> of noble Antilochus,<sup>11</sup> and of Aias,<sup>12</sup> who surpassed all the Danaans<sup>13</sup> in beauty of physique and manly bearing, except for the flawless son of Peleus.<sup>14</sup> The spirit of swift-footed Achilles of the house of Aeacus<sup>15</sup> recognized me, and mournfully spoke in winged words: "Son of

<sup>1</sup>The greatest of the Greek gods. The title implies Odysseus's godlike heroic qualities.

<sup>2</sup>The spirits of the dead can communicate with Odysseus only after he drinks blood from animals he has sacrificed.

<sup>3</sup>Poseidon, god of the sea and of earthquakes.

<sup>4</sup>The Cyclops, a son of Poseidon, was a one-eyed, cannibal giant whom Odysseus had blinded in self-defense.

<sup>5</sup>The mythical island of the sun-god Helios, where he pastured his sacred cattle; ancient Greek commentators on Homer identified it as the island of Sicily.

<sup>6</sup>The sun-god.

<sup>7</sup>The crew will kill and eat the sun-god's flocks, and all, except Odysseus, will die as a result.

<sup>8</sup>Odysseus will be in a region where no one knows what an oar's function is. Rather, they will mistake it for the long-

handled shallow basket in which grain was tossed in order to separate the cereal from the chaff.

<sup>9</sup>The bull was sacred to Poseidon. (See Chapter 1, source 8 for examples of the popularity of the bull as a sacred animal.)

<sup>10</sup>Achilles' best friend, who also died at Troy.

<sup>11</sup>An Achaean hero who fell at Troy while defending his father, King Nestor of Pylos (note 21).

<sup>12</sup>The Achaeans' second-greatest warrior; he committed suicide at Troy after Odysseus bested him in a contest for the armor of the dead Achilles.

<sup>13</sup>Another name for the Achaeans.

<sup>14</sup>Achilles.

<sup>15</sup>The ancestor from whom Peleus and his son Achilles were descended. Homer's heroes always identified themselves by reference to their fathers and other notable ancestors.

Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus, known for your many wiles! Rash man, what greater deed than this remains for you to devise in your heart? How did you dare to descend to Hades<sup>16</sup> realm, where the dead dwell as witless images of worn-out mortals?"

Thus he spoke, and I answered in return. "Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the mightiest of the Achaeans, I came to consult with Teiresias in the hope of his giving me a plan whereby I might reach rocky Ithaca. For I have not yet come near the land of Achaea,<sup>17</sup> nor yet set foot on my own island, but have been constantly beset by misfortunes. How different from your situation, Achilles, you who are more fortunate than any man whoever was or will be. For in the old days, when you were alive, we Argives<sup>18</sup> honored you as though you were a god, and now that you are here, you rule nobly among the dead. Therefore, grieve not, Achilles, that you are dead."

So I spoke, and he immediately answered, saying: "Do not endeavor to speak soothingly to me of death, Lord Odysseus. I would rather live on earth as the hired help of some landless man whose own livelihood was meager, than be lord over all the dead who have perished. Enough of that. Tell me about my son, that lordly young man. Did he follow me to war and play a leading role in it? And tell me about noble Peleus. . . . I am not there in the sunlight to aid Peleus with that great strength that was once mine on the broad plains of Troy, where I slew the best of the enemy's army in defense of the Argives. If, but for an hour, I could return to my father's house with such strength as I once had, I would give those who do him violence and dishonor him cause to rue my might and my invincible hands."

So he spoke, and I answered: "I have heard nothing about noble Peleus, but I will give you all the news you desire of your dear son, Neoptolemus.<sup>19</sup> It was I who brought him from Scyros<sup>20</sup> in my well-fashioned, hollow ship to join the ranks of the well-armed Achaeans. Whenever we held a council meeting during the siege of Troy, he was always the first to speak, and his words never missed the mark. Godlike Nestor<sup>21</sup> and I alone surpassed him. As often as we fought with bronze weapons on the Trojan plain, he never lagged behind in the ranks or crowd, but would always run far out in front, yielding first place to no one, and he slew many men in mortal combat. I could not name all whom he killed in defense of the Argives. . . . Again, when we, the best of the Argives, were about to enter into the horse that Epeus made,<sup>22</sup> and responsibility lay solely with me to either open or keep closed the door of our stout-built ambush, the other Danaan leaders and chieftains were wiping away tears from their eyes and each man's limbs shook beneath him. But never did my eyes see his fair face grow pale, nor did I see him wiping away tears from his cheeks. Rather, he earnestly begged me to allow him to sally forth from the horse, and he kept handling his sword-hilt and his heavy bronze spear in his eagerness to inflict harm on the Trojans. Following our sack of the lofty city of Priam,<sup>23</sup> he boarded his ship with a full share of the spoils and his special prize.<sup>24</sup> And he was unscathed, never cut by a sharp sword or wounded in close combat, as often happens in war, since Ares<sup>25</sup> rages in a confused fashion."

So I spoke, and the spirit of the son of Aeacus departed with long strides across the field of asphodel,<sup>26</sup> rejoicing that his son was preeminent among men.

<sup>16</sup>The god of the dead.

<sup>17</sup>The land of the Achaeans — mainland Greece.

<sup>18</sup>Another name for the Achaeans.

<sup>19</sup>Fittingly, his name means "New War."

<sup>20</sup>The Aegean island where Achilles' son had been raised.

<sup>21</sup>The aged king of Pylos noted for his wisdom and sage advice.

<sup>22</sup>The so-called Trojan horse, through which the Achaeans finally were able to capture Troy.

<sup>23</sup>The last king of Troy.

<sup>24</sup>At the division of the Trojan survivors, Neoptolemus was awarded Andromache, widow of Hector, Troy's greatest hero, whom Achilles had killed in single combat.

<sup>25</sup>The god of war.

<sup>26</sup>A flower that carpeted the Elysian Fields, where the spirits of dead heroes, such as Achilles, resided.





## Establishing a Covenant with Humanity



### ▼ THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The major documentary source for both the process of cultural fusion and the fierce struggles that took place among the various groups of Iron Age settlers in Syria-Palestine is a collection of sacred Hebrew writings known as the *Bible* (from the Greek word *biblos*, which means “book”). The exclusively Hebrew, or Jewish, portion of the Bible, known to Jews as the *Tanakh* but called by Christians the *Old Testament*, consists of many different types of literature. These were mainly composed, edited, and reedited from roughly 1000 B.C.E. to possibly as late as the second century B.C.E., although Jewish religious authorities did not fix the *Tanakh*’s final canon, or official body of accepted texts, until 100 C.E. This means that biblical accounts of early Hebrew history are, in many cases, centuries removed from the events they narrate. It is nevertheless clear that these later authors often used early written and oral sources that are now lost to us. Moreover, although these authors primarily wrote history from a theological perspective and consequently clothed their stories in myth, independent archeological evidence has often confirmed the basic historical outline of many but not all of the biblical stories concerning the fortunes of the Hebrews in Canaan, the *Promised Land*.

The first book of the Bible is known as *Genesis* (the beginning) and recounts the story of humanity’s relationship with YHWH from Creation through the settlement of the Hebrew people, also known as the *Children of Israel*, in Egypt. Tradition ascribes its authorship to *Moses*, one of the most enigmatic and elusive figures in the Bible. Modern scholars are divided over whether or not there was a historical Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt and passed on to them a set of laws that made them uniquely YHWH’s people (source 14). Later Israelites did not doubt Moses’ historicity, but this did not necessarily mean they believed Moses actually wrote or dictated Genesis. Rather, within the context of their culture, calling this book “Mosaic” meant they understood Moses to be the one who provided the initial and pervading spirit behind the work. In all likelihood, a number of different authors composed and reworked Genesis over the period from before 900 B.C.E. to after 721 B.C.E., but they might well have drawn on traditions that stretched back to the time of the Israelites’ infiltration into Canaan.

The following selection recounts a popular Southwest Asian theme that we saw in Chapter 1, source 1: the Flood. As you read it, be aware not only of the

striking similarities between it and the story told by Utnapishtim but of the even more significant differences. Remember that the author is making a religious statement.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why does YHWH destroy all humanity except Noah and his family? How does YHWH's reasoning compare with the Mesopotamian gods' reason for wanting to destroy humans and Ea's decision to warn Utnapishtim?
2. Compare YHWH's treatment of Noah and his descendants following the Flood with the Mesopotamian gods' treatment of Utnapishtim after the waters had receded.
3. What do the Mesopotamian gods demand of humans? What does Noah's God demand?
4. From these several comparisons, what picture emerges of the god of the Hebrews? In what ways is their deity similar to the gods of Mesopotamia? In what ways does their god differ?
5. Consider the story of Noah's curse on Canaan. What has Ham done to deserve such anger, and why is it that his son suffers as a consequence? Do your answers tell us anything about Hebrew social values and practices at this time?
6. How does the story of the curse on Ham have relevance to the Hebrews' settlement in the land of Canaan? What does this suggest about the story's date of composition? How does this illustrate the Hebrews' use of myth to explain and justify historical events?

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. . . .

Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. And Noah had three sons, Shem,<sup>1</sup> Ham, and Japheth.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw

the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. . . . For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring

<sup>1</sup>Shem was the eldest of Noah's sons and the one from whom the Hebrews claimed direct descent. The term *Semite* is derived from the name.



two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals,<sup>2</sup> the male and his mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate; and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive upon the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will blot out from the face of the ground." And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark, to escape the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.<sup>3</sup> And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. . . .

And the waters prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole

heaven were covered. . . . He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters had abated; and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, and sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; but the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put forth his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she did not return to him any more.

In the six hundred and first year,<sup>4</sup> in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters

<sup>2</sup>A ritually clean animal, such as a sheep, was one worthy of sacrifice to YHWH. An unclean animal, such as a predator or a scavenger, would never be offered in sacrifice.

<sup>3</sup>The view of the world shared by the peoples of Southwest Asia at this time was that the world's firmament, or land,

was totally surrounded, above and below, by water. The water above was normally kept in place by a translucent crystalline sphere. Rain was the seepage of water through that sphere.

<sup>4</sup>Of Noah's life.

were dried from off the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. . . . Then God said to Noah, "Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring forth with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh — birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth — that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth." So Noah went forth, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. And every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves upon the earth, went forth by families out of the ark.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.<sup>5</sup> For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply,

bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it."

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow<sup>6</sup> in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled.

Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their

<sup>5</sup>Raw meat or meat dripping with blood could not be consumed.

<sup>6</sup>A rainbow. Compare this with Ishtar's rainbow (Chapter 1, source 1).

father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said

"Cursed be Canaan;  
a slave of slaves shall he be to  
his brothers."<sup>7</sup>

He also said,

"Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem;  
and let Canaan be his slave.  
God enlarge Japheth,  
and let him dwell in the tents of Shem;<sup>8</sup>  
and let Canaan be his slave."

After the flood Noah lived three hundred and fifty years. All the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

<sup>7</sup>According to Hebrew legend, Ham and his son Canaan were the direct ancestors of the Canaanites, the people whom the Hebrews were dispossessing of their lands.

<sup>8</sup>Japheth, according to Hebrew tradition, was the ancestor

of the Indo-European peoples of northern Syria and beyond, such as the Hittites and Hurrians. From the Hebrew perspective, the Hebrews and the northern Indo-Europeans were dividing up the land of Syria-Palestine between them.

## Establishing a Covenant with a Chosen People



### ▼ THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

The story of Noah tells of YHWH's post-Deluge covenant with all living creatures; the story of the Hebrews' *Exodus* (going out) from Egypt tells of their special Covenant with this god and their becoming a *Chosen People* with a new identity.

The Hebrews had probably entered Egypt in the time of the conquest of Lower Egypt, or the Delta region, by the Hyksos (rulers from foreign lands), who came in from the deserts of western Asia around 1700 B.C.E. With the overthrow of the Hyksos and the re-establishment of native Egyptian rule around 1570, significant numbers of these Hebrews were probably enslaved, as happened to many Asian prisoners of war in Egypt at that time. That at least seems to be a likely scenario if we seek to fit the story told in the Bible's Book of Exodus with the sketchy picture we have of Egyptian history during the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom that followed.

At this point reconstruction of the next stage of Hebrew history becomes even more problematic, due to the many, sometimes contradictory, layers of legend and folktale motifs that we find in the biblical story of their flight from Egypt. Yet, several aspects of the story have the ring of validity and lead many historians to accept the basic historicity of the Exodus, even though they might question many of the details of the story as narrated in the Bible. The fact that the Israelites trace their origins as a people to an age of bondage and oppression, rather than claiming kings and heroes as their progenitors, suggests that this less than glorious beginning was rooted in historical reality. Equally telling is the origin of Moses' name, which most likely derives from the Egyptian verb *msy* (born). This hint of Egyptian heritage lends a certain credence to his presumed historicity, even though there is no known record of Moses or the flight of the Hebrews outside of the Bible. Assuming that their oral traditions retained a valid core memory of their flight from Egypt and subsequent wanderings, we can say with hesitant confidence that a charismatic leader, whom history remembers as Moses,



arose to lead a band of these Hebrews out of Egypt and to the borders of Canaan, probably sometime around the reign of Rameses the Great (r. ?1279–1213? B.C.E.). Further, and most important of all, in the process of their migration, Moses molded the Hebrews into a people and wedded them to his god YHWH. No longer a loose band of nomads, they were now the *Israelites* — descendants of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (also called Israel).

The story of this transformation is told in several books of the Bible. This selection comes from *Deuteronomy*, which was shaped into the form in which we have it during the reign of King Josiah of Jerusalem (r. 640–609 B.C.E.). *Deuteronomy* was composed or, more likely, recast at a time of religious reformation, when Josiah was attempting to abolish all forms of pagan worship in his kingdom, especially the practices of the Assyrians. Although *Deuteronomy*, as we know it, is essentially a seventh-century creation, there is good reason to conclude it is based on sources that date from the time of Moses.

The setting of our excerpt is the frontier of Canaan, which the Israelites have reached after forty years of wandering in the desert. Moses, realizing he will die before his people cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land, delivers a final message to them.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is the Covenant between YHWH and the people of Israel? What does God promise and demand in return? What does YHWH threaten for those who break the Covenant?
2. Consider YHWH's promises again. What does YHWH have to say about rewards after death? What do you infer from your answer?
3. Which elements of Moses' message would the religious reformers of seventh-century Jerusalem wish to emphasize?
4. Compare the Ten Commandments with either the *Judgments of Hammurabi* or the Egyptian *The Negative Confession* (Chapter 1, sources 2 and 3). Which strike you as more significant, the similarities or the differences? What do you conclude from your answer?

And Moses summoned all Israel,<sup>1</sup> and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your hearing this day, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.<sup>2</sup> Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are

all of us here alive this day. The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

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<sup>1</sup>The Hebrews referred to themselves as *Israel* and also as the *Children of Israel* and the *Israelites* because they traced their lineage to Jacob, whose name God had changed to Israel (God rules). Jacob, the grandson of Abraham and the

son of Isaac, had twelve sons, each of whom became the patriarch of one of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>Also known as *Mount Sinai*. Here Moses had received the Law from YHWH during the period of desert wandering.

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

"Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

"Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you; that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you, in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

"You shall not kill.

"Neither shall you commit adultery.

"Neither shall you steal.

"Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.

"Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's."

"These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them to me. . . .

"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it; that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them; that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

"And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you, with great and goodly cities, which you did not build, and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, then take heed lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him, and swear by his name. You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples who are round about you; for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous

God; lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. . . .

“When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you . . . seven nations greater and mightier than yourselves, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, and show no mercy to them. You shall not make marriages with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Asherim,<sup>3</sup> and burn their graven images with fire.

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a

mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, and repays those who hate him, by destroying them; he will not be slack with him who hates him. . . . You shall therefore be careful to do the commandments, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you this day.

“And because you hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love which he swore to your fathers to keep; he will love you, bless you, and multiply you; he will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the young of your flock, in the land which he swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the Lord will take away from you all sickness; and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will he inflict upon you, but he will lay them upon all who hate you. And you shall destroy all the peoples that the Lord your God will give over to you, your eye shall not pity them; neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.”

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<sup>3</sup>Sacred poles raised to Astarte (or Asherah), the Canaanite counterpart of Ishtar, the Mesopotamian goddess of fertility and love (Chapter 1, source 1).





## The Struggle between Good and Evil



### ▼ *Zarathustra, GATHAS*

During the second millennium B.C.E., about the same time that one branch of the Aryans wandered into the Indian subcontinent, another branch settled the highlands of *Iran* (the land of the Aryans). Initially, the religion and general culture of the people who settled Iran were almost identical to that of the vedic Aryans of India. For example, the Iranians celebrated the slaying of Verethra, the drought, by their war-god Indara. The parallel with Indra's striking down Vritra, the dragon of drought, is obvious (see Chapter 2, source 11). In time, however, these Iranians developed a civilization that differed radically from that of the Indo-Aryans. We call that ancient civilization *Persian*.

By the late sixth century B.C.E., the Persians possessed the largest empire the world had yet seen. For nearly two centuries they united Southwest Asia and portions of Central Asia, Northeast Africa, and the Balkan region of Europe into a politically centralized yet culturally diverse entity. During the reign of Darius the Great (r. 522–486 B.C.E.), who rightly styled himself King of Kings, the royal house of Persia officially adopted as its religion the teachings of a native son, Zarathustra (or Zoroaster, as he was called by the Greeks). The highly ethical message of this Persian religious visionary appears to have been one of the major factors contributing to the empire's general policy of good government.

We know very little about the life of Zarathustra. According to a late Persian tradition, he lived 258 years before Alexander the Great, or around the first quarter of the sixth century B.C.E. As appealing as this putative date is for those who would place this religious revolutionary squarely into the so-called Axial Age, it seems likely that Zarathustra flourished many centuries earlier. The archaic language of his few extant hymns strongly suggests that he lived no later than 1000 B.C.E., probably closer to 1200, and possibly as early as the 1300s. Apparently he belonged to the priestly class that performed fire sacrifices, very much like the Indo-Aryan Brahmins. The religious world into which he had been born was filled with a multiplicity of lesser gods known as *daevas* (called *devas* by the Indo-Aryans) and three greater gods, each of whom bore the title *Ahura* (Lord), and all of these deities commanded worship. Zarathustra's great religious breakthrough seems to have been that he preached that one of these divine beings, Ahura Mazda, was the sole God of creation and the supreme deity of the universe. This uncreated God and source of all goodness alone was worthy of the highest worship. To be sure, Ahura Mazda had created lesser benign spirits, known as *yazatas*, to aid him, and they merited devotion, but all of the traditional Iranian *daevas* were evil demons, who deserved no worship. Indeed, these *daevas* were the creation of another uncreated entity, *Angra Mainyu* (Hostile Spirit), whose evil existence was the source of all sin and misery in the universe.

It is clear that Zarathustra claimed to be the *prophet* (a person speaking by divine inspiration and, thereby, revealing the will of God) of Ahura Mazda. Equally clear, Zarathustra taught his disciples that Ahura Mazda required all humans to join in the cosmic struggle against Angra Mainyu. Although coeternal with Lord Wisdom, Hostile Spirit was nowhere his equal. To be sure, Angra Mainyu (also known as the *Liar*) and his minions afflicted human souls with evil and led them away from the path of righteousness, but in the end Angra Mainyu and his daevas would be defeated. Strictly speaking, such a vision, which sees the universe engaged in a contest between two divine principles, one good and the other evil, is not monotheistic but rather dualistic. Nevertheless, Zarathustra's dualistic theology focused on a single God of goodness and should be seen as one of the major roots of Southwest Asian ethical monotheism.

Zarathustra's teachings took hold in Persia, especially with the rise of the first Persian Empire in the sixth century B.C.E. From 224 to 651 C.E. Zoroastrianism was the official state religion of a revived Persian Empire under the Sassanian house, and it was only in the Sassanian Era, possibly as late as the sixth century C.E., that the *Avesta*, the Zoroastrian collection of holy scripture, was written down



in its final form. Although the *Avesta* encompasses many texts that date from well after Zarathustra's time, it contains a few short devotional hymns, known as *Gathas*, that date to the age of Zarathustra and probably owe their composition to him or an early disciple. Their archaic language and often unclear references make them hard, even impossible to interpret with full confidence. Yet, they are our only reliable sources for the original teachings of the Persian prophet. As such, they illustrate, but ambiguously so, his vision and message.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How are we able to infer that Zarathustra believed he had been called directly by Ahura Mazda to serve as a prophet?
2. What evidence indicates that Zarathustra saw Ahura Mazda as the sole creator of the universe?
3. Where and how does Zarathustra refer to Ahura Mazda's use of humanity and history to realize certain sacred purposes?
4. How does each person's life become a microcosm of the battle between Ahura Mazda and the Liar?
5. How do we know that Zarathustra believed Ahura Mazda would ultimately triumph over evil?
6. Does Zarathustra see his faith as only one of many paths to the truth or is it the Truth?
7. What is promised those who serve Ahura Mazda faithfully? What about those who do not accept and serve this God?

Then shall I recognize you as strong and holy, Mazda,<sup>1</sup> when by the hand in which you yourself hold the destinies that you will assign to the Liar and the Righteous . . . the might of Good Thought<sup>2</sup> shall come to me.

As the holy one I recognized you, Mazda Ahura, when I saw you in the beginning at the birth of Life, when you made actions and words to have their reward — evil for the evil, a good Destiny for the good — through your wisdom when creation shall reach its goal.

At which goal you will come with your holy Spirit, O Mazda, with Dominion, at the same with Good Thought, by whose action the settlements<sup>3</sup> will prosper through Right. . . .

As the holy one I recognized you, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me and asked me, "Who are you? to whom do you belong? By what sign will you appoint the days for questioning about your possessions and yourself?"

Then I said to him: "To the first question, I am Zarathustra, a true foe to the Liar, to the utmost of my power, but a powerful support would I be to the Righteous, that I may attain the future things of the infinite Dominion, as I praise and proclaim you, Mazda." . . .

As the holy one I recognized you, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me, when the still mind taught me to declare what is best:

<sup>1</sup>Mazda means "wise" or "wisdom."

<sup>2</sup>Zarathustra conceived of Good Thought, Piety, and other such entities as spiritual beings whom Ahura Mazda had created to help in the battle against the forces of evil.

<sup>3</sup>People who are settled or civilized.

"Let not a man seek again and again to please the Liars, for they make all the righteous enemies."

And thus Zarathustra himself, O Ahura, chooses that spirit of thine that is holiest, Mazda. May Right be embodied, full of life and strength! May Piety abide in the Dominion where the sun shines! May Good Thought give destiny to men according to their works!

▼ ▼ ▼

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura. Who is by generation the Father of Right, at the first? Who determined the path of sun and stars? Who is it by whom the moon waxes and wanes again? This, O Mazda, and yet more, I want to know.

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura. Who upheld the earth beneath and the firmament from falling? Who the waters and the plants? Who yoked swiftness to winds and clouds? Who is, O Mazda, creator of Good Thought?

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura. What artist made light and darkness? What artist made sleep and waking? Who made morning, noon, and night, that call the understanding man to his duty? . . .

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura. Who created together with Dominion the precious Piety? Who made by wisdom the son obedient to his father? I strive to recognize by these things you, O Mazda, creator of all things through the holy spirit. . . .

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura. The Religion which is the best for all that are, which in union with Right should make prosperous all that is mine, will they duly observe it, the religion of my creed, with the words and action of Piety, in desire for your future good things, O Mazda?

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura — whether Piety will extend to those to whom your Reli-

gion shall be proclaimed? I was ordained at the first by you: all others I look upon with hatred of spirit.

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura. Who among those with whom I would speak is a righteous man, and who a liar? On which side is the enemy? . . .

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura — whether we shall drive the Lie away from us to those who being full of disobedience will not strive after fellowship with Right, nor trouble themselves with counsel of Good Thought. . . .

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura — whether through you I shall attain my goal . . . and that my voice may be effectual, that Welfare and Immortality may be ready to unite according to that promise with him who joins himself with Right.

This I ask you, tell me truly, Ahura — whether I shall indeed, O Right, earn that reward, even ten mares with a stallion and a camel,<sup>4</sup> which was promised to me, O Mazda, as well as through you the future gift of Welfare and Immortality.

▼ ▼ ▼

I will speak of that which Mazda Ahura, the all-knowing, revealed to me first in this earthly life. Those of you that put not in practice this word as I think and utter it, to them shall be woe at the end of life. . . .

I will speak of that which the Holiest declared to me as the word that is best for mortals to obey: he, Mazda Ahura said, "They who at my bidding render him<sup>5</sup> obedience, shall all attain Welfare and Immortality by the actions of the Good Spirit." . . .

In immortality shall the soul of the righteous be joyful, in perpetuity shall be the torments of the Liars. All this does Mazda Ahura appoint by his Dominion.

<sup>4</sup>Symbols of good fortune and earthly prosperity.

<sup>5</sup>Zarathustra.

## Socrates and the Laws of Athens



### ▼ *Plato, CRITO*

In his Funeral Oration, Pericles claims that Athenians respect authority and the laws. The question is, how far does civic obedience extend when legal authorities have apparently perverted or misapplied the law? The question was more than academic for the philosopher and social critic *Socrates* of Athens (ca. 469–399



B.C.E.). Socrates' uncompromising search for truth and goodness of soul led him to expose humbuggery and hypocrisy wherever he found them, and he earned the enmity of many who had been stung by his and his students' ability to tie into logical knots people who were guilty of fuzzy thinking or moral obtuseness. For most of his seventy years, Athens tolerated this self-proclaimed gadfly, but in the mood of bitter recrimination that followed Athens's defeat in the Peloponnesian War — a defeat that had been precipitated by the ill-considered policies of one of Socrates' former students — the philosopher found himself defending not only his teachings but his very life. In 399 a young conservative politician charged the old man with introducing strange gods and corruption of Athens's youth. Found guilty in a public trial, Socrates chose the sentence of death rather than exile.

Much of what we know, or think we know, about Socrates comes from the *Dialogues* of Plato (427–348 B.C.E.), one of Socrates' students and arguably the most original philosopher produced by classical Hellas. The *Dialogues* consist of a series of conversations that Socrates allegedly had with a number of contemporaries regarding ethical, social, and political issues. How much of what we read in them is truly Socratic and how much is Platonic remains a subject of vigorous debate among scholars.

The dialogue from which the present source is excerpted is known as the *Crito*. The setting is prison, where Socrates awaits imminent execution. Crito, his friend of many years, visits and informs the philosopher that escape is possible. A number of people stand ready to bribe some willing officials to let Socrates slip away into exile. Socrates refuses and in doing so delivers what is known as "The Speech of the Laws of Athens," in which he addresses the obligations of citizenship.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are the Laws' essential arguments, and why does Socrates find them compelling?
2. Socrates speaks of following the divine will, but are his arguments regarding right and wrong based on a god-centered religious vision or on something else? What conclusions follow from your answer?
3. Compare Socrates' view of citizenship and its rights and responsibilities with those of Pericles. Do they agree? Based on your study of both sources, what inferences have you reached regarding citizenship in Athens?
4. What would a Chinese Legalist, such as we saw in source 25, think of this speech?

SOCRATES: In leaving the prison against the will of the Athenians, do I wrong any? or rather do I not wrong those whom I ought least to wrong? Do I not desert the principles which were acknowledged by us to be just — what do you say?

CRITO: I cannot tell Socrates; for I do not know.

SOCRATES: Then consider the matter in this way: — Imagine that I am about to play truant (you may call the proceeding by any name which you like), and the laws and the government come and interrogate me: "Tell us Socrates," they say, "what are you about? Are you not going by an

act of yours to overturn us — the laws, and the whole state, as far as in you lies? Do you imagine that a state can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and trampled upon by individuals?" What will be our answer, Crito, to these and the like words? Any one, and especially a rhetorician, will have a good deal to say on behalf of the law which requires a sentence to be carried out. He will argue that this law should not be set aside; and shall we reply, "Yes, but the state has injured us and gives an unjust sentence." Suppose I say that?

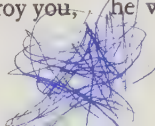
CRITO: Very good, Socrates.

SOCRATES: "And was that our agreement with you?" the law would answer, "or were you to abide by the sentence of the state?" And if I were to express my astonishment at their words, the law would probably add: "Answer, Socrates, instead of opening your eyes — you are in the habit of asking and answering questions. Tell us, — What complaint have you to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the state? In the first place did we not bring you into existence? Your father married your mother by our aid and begat you. Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us who regulate marriage?" None, I should reply. "Or against those of us who after birth regulate the nurture and education of children, in which you also were trained? Were not the laws which have the charge of education, right in commanding your father to train you in music and gymnastic?" Right, I should reply. "Well then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that you are our child and slave, as your fathers were before you? And if this is true you are not on equal terms with us; nor can you think that you have a right to do to us what we are doing to you. Would you have any right to strike or revile or do any other evil to your father or your master, if you had one, because you have been struck or reviled by him, or received some other evil at his hands? — you would not say this? And because we think right to destroy you,

do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies? Will you, O professor of true virtue, pretend that you are justified in this? Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor, and more to be regarded in the eyes of the gods and of men of understanding? also to be soothed, and gently and reverently entreated when angry, even more than a father, and either to be persuaded, or if not persuaded, to be obeyed? And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence; and if she lead us to wounds or death in battle, thither we follow as is right; neither may any one yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must do what his city and his country order him; or he must change their view of what is just: and if he may do no violence to his father or mother, much less may he do violence to his country." What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the laws speak truly, or do they not?

CRITO: I think they do.

SOCRATES: Then the laws will say: "Consider, Socrates, if we are speaking truly that in your present attempt you are going to do us an injury. For, having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good which we had to give, we further proclaim to any Athenian by the liberty that we allow him, that if he does not like us when he has become of age and has seen the ways of the city, and made our acquaintance, he may go where he pleases and take his goods with him. None of us laws will forbid him or interfere with him. Any one who does not like us and the city, and who wants to emigrate to a colony or to any other city, may go where he likes, retaining his property. But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the state, and still remains, has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him. And he who



disobeys us is, as we maintain, thrice wrong; first, because in disobeying us he is disobeying his parents; secondly, because we are the authors of his education; thirdly, because he has made an agreement with us that he will duly obey our commands; and he neither obeys them nor convinces us that our commands are unjust; and we do not rudely impose them, but give him the alternative of obeying or convincing us; — that is what we offer, and he does neither.

“These are the sort of accusations to which as we were saying, you, Socrates, will be exposed if you accomplish your intentions; you, above all other Athenians.” Suppose now I ask, why I rather than anybody else? They will justly retort upon me that I above all other men have acknowledged the agreement. “There is clear proof,” they will say, “Socrates, that we and the city were not displeasing to you. Of all Athenians you have been the most constant resident in the city, which, as you never leave, you may be supposed to love. For you never went out of the city either to see the games,<sup>1</sup> except once when you went to Isthmus,<sup>2</sup> or to any other place unless when you were on military service; nor did you travel as other men do. Nor had you any curiosity to know other states or their laws. Your affections did not go beyond us and our state; we were your special favorites, and you acquiesced in our government of you; and here in this city you begat your children, which is proof of your satisfaction. Moreover, you might in the course of the trial, if you had liked, have fixed the penalty at banishment; the state which refuses to let you go now would have let you go then. But you pretended that you preferred death to exile and that you were not unwilling to die. And now you have forgotten these fine sentiments, and pay no respect to us the laws, of whom you are the destroyer; and are doing what only a miserable slave would do, running away and turning your back upon the compacts and agreements which you made as a

citizen. And first of all answer this very question: Are we right in saying that you agreed to be governed according to us in deed, and not in word only? Is that true or not?” How shall we answer, Crito? Must we not assent?

CRITO: We cannot help it, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then will they not say: “You, Socrates, are breaking the covenants and agreements which you made with us at your leisure, not in any haste or under any compulsion or deception, but after you have had seventy years to think of them, during which time you were at liberty to leave the city, if we were not to your mind, or if our covenants appeared to you to be unfair. You had your choice, and might have gone either to Lacedaemon<sup>3</sup> or Crete, both which states are often praised by you for their good government, or to some other Hellenic or foreign state. Whereas you, above all other Athenians, seemed to be so fond of the state, or, in other words, of us her laws (and who would care about a state which has no laws?), that you never stirred out of her; the halt, the blind, the maimed were not more stationary in her than you were. And now you run away and forsake your agreements. Not so, Socrates, if you will take our advice; do not make yourself ridiculous by escaping out of the city.”

“For just consider, if you transgress and err in this sort of way, what good will you do either to yourself or to your friends? That your friends will be driven into exile and deprived of citizenship, or will lose their property, is tolerably certain; and you yourself, if you fly to one of the neighboring cities, as, for example, Thebes or Megara, both of which are well governed, will come to them as an enemy, Socrates, and their government will be against you, and all patriotic citizens will cast an evil eye upon you as a subverter of the laws, and you will confirm in the minds of the judges the justice of their own condemnation of you. For he who is a corrupter of the laws

<sup>1</sup>Various religious festivals at which athletic games were held. The most famous were the pan-Hellenic Olympic Games.

<sup>2</sup>The Isthmian Games in honor of Poseidon and held by the

city of Corinth, which commanded the isthmus that connects central Greece with the Peloponnesian Peninsula.

<sup>3</sup>Sparta.



is more than likely to be a corrupter of the young and foolish portion of mankind. Will you then flee from well-ordered cities and virtuous men? And is existence worth having on these terms? Or will you go to them without shame, and talk to them, Socrates? And what will you say to them? What you say here about virtue and justice and institutions and laws being the best things among men? Would that be decent of you? Surely not. But if you go away from well-governed states to Crito's friends in Thessaly,<sup>4</sup> where there is great disorder and license, they will be charmed to hear the tale of your escape from prison, set off with ludicrous particulars of the manner in which you were wrapped in a goatskin or some other disguise, and metamorphosed as the manner is of runaways; but will there be no one to remind you that in your old age you were not ashamed to violate the most sacred laws from a miserable desire of a little more life? Perhaps not, if you keep them in good temper; but if they are out of temper you will hear many degrading things; you will live, but how? — as the flatterer of all men, and the servant of all men; and doing what? — eating and drinking in Thessaly, having gone abroad in order that you may get a dinner. And where will be your fine sentiments about justice and virtue? Say that you wish to live for the sake of your children — you want to bring them up and educate them — will you take them into Thessaly and deprive them of Athenian citizenship? Is this the benefit which you will confer upon them? Or are you under the impression that they will be better cared for and educated here if you are still alive, although absent from them; for your friends will

take care of them? Do you fancy that if you are an inhabitant of Thessaly they will take care of them, and if you are an inhabitant of the other world that they will not take care of them? Nay; but if they who call themselves friends are good for anything, they will — to be sure they will.

"Listen then, Socrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below. For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier or holier or juster in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Crito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the laws but of men. But if you go forth, returning evil for evil, and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements which you have made with us, and wronging those whom you ought least of all to wrong, that is to say, yourself, your friends, your country, and us, we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren, the laws in the world below, will receive you as an enemy; for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen, then, to us and not to Crito."

This, dear Crito, is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic; that voice, I say, is humming in my ears, and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be vain. Yet speak, if you have anything to say.

CRITO: I have nothing to say, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Leave me then, Crito, to fulfill the divine will, and to follow whither it leads.

<sup>4</sup>A wild area of northern Greece. In 410 B.C.E. the playwright Euripides left Athens for Thessaly, apparently disappointed at his lack of popular acclaim in his native city. From there he went to equally remote Macedon.

## Daoism: The Way That Is and Is Not



### ▼ *Laozi*, THE CLASSIC OF THE WAY AND VIRTUE

Few if any philosophies are as enigmatic as *Daoism* — the teachings of the Way (Dao). The opening lines of this school's greatest masterpiece, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue* (*Dao De Jing*), which is ascribed to the legendary *Laozi*, immediately confront the reader with Daoism's essential paradox: "The Way that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Way. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name." Here is a philosophy that purports to teach *the* Way of truth but simultaneously claims that the True Way transcends human understanding. Encapsulated within a little book of some five thousand words is a philosophy that defies definition, spurns reason, and rejects words as inadequate.

The Dao is limitless and its origins are infinite; somewhat like the Way that it purports to teach and not teach, Daoism has many manifestations and numerous origins. No one knows when or where it originated, but its roots probably lie in the animistic religions of prehistorical China. Daoism's earliest sages are equally shadowy. According to tradition, *Laozi* supposedly was born around 604 B.C.E. and died about 517, making him an older contemporary of Confucius (source 24). According to one popular story, when Confucius visited him, Laozi instructed the younger man to rid himself of his arrogant airs and then bade him farewell. As another story has it, the aged Laozi decided to leave the state in which he lived because he foresaw its imminent decay. At the frontier he was delayed by a border official, who implored him not to depart without first leaving behind his wisdom. In response, Laozi dashed off the *Dao De Jing* and left, never to be heard from again (although according to one story that sprang up in Daoist circles in the fourth century C.E., Laozi went to India where he became the Buddha). The fact that Laozi means "Old Master" suggests to many that this sage was more a composite figure of legend and imagination than a historic individual of flesh and blood. Indeed, many scholars conclude that the bulk of the language, ideas, and allusions contained within this classic indicate an intellectual environment closer to 300 than to 500 B.C.E.

Whatever its date and circumstances of its composition, the *Dao De Jing* is one of the most profound and beautiful works ever written in Chinese and one of the

most popular. Daoism, especially as articulated in this little book, has exercised an incalculable influence on Chinese life, thought, and art over the centuries.

As you study the following selections, pay particular attention to the Daoist notion of *Actionless Activity*. Known in Chinese as *wuwei* and also translated as "Effortlessness," "Nonaction," and "Non-striving," this idea pervades all Daoist thought and comes closest to being Daoism's universal principle and driving force, if such is possible.

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does one define the Way? How permanent is it? How limited is it? Is there anything it does not encompass?
2. Does the Way acknowledge absolute right and wrong?
3. What is *wuwei*, and how does it function? Why is it the greatest form of action?
4. How does a sage ruler who is in harmony with the Way govern?
5. What are Daoism's major criticisms of Confucianism and Legalism?
6. Why would Daoism appeal to some individuals in the Age of Warring States?
7. When Buddhism initially entered China in the early centuries C.E., many Chinese thought it to be a variation of Daoism. How and why was this possible? In what ways was this a misperception?

## THE WAY

The Dao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Dao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.

Conceived of as having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; conceived of as having a name, it is the Mother of all things.

▼ ▼ ▼

The Dao produces all things and nourishes them; it produces them and does not claim them as its own; it does all, and yet does not boast of it; it presides over all, and yet does not control them. This is what is called "The mysterious quality" of the Dao.

▼ ▼ ▼

When the Great Dao ceased to be observed, benevolence and righteousness came into vogue. Then appeared wisdom and shrewdness, and there ensued great hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup>

▼ ▼ ▼

Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Dao. The law of the Dao is its being what it is.

▼ ▼ ▼

All-pervading is the Great Dao! It may be found on the left hand and on the right.

All things depend on it for their production, which it gives to them, not one refusing obedience to it. When its work is accomplished, it

<sup>1</sup>This is a criticism of the supposed hypocrisy of Confucians who claim to know and practice virtue (see source 24).



does not claim the name of having done it. It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their lord; — it may be named in the smallest things; . . . it may be named in the greatest things.

▼ ▼ ▼

He who has in himself abundantly the attributes of the Dao is like an infant.

▼ ▼ ▼

The Dao in its regular course does nothing, for the sake of doing it, and so there is nothing which it does not do.

### THE WISE PERSON

When we renounce learning we have no troubles.<sup>2</sup>

▼ ▼ ▼

If we could renounce our sageship and discard our wisdom, it would be better for the people a hundredfold. If we could renounce our benevolence and discard our righteousness, the people would again become filial and kindly.<sup>3</sup> If we could renounce our artful contrivances and discard our scheming for gain, there would be no thieves nor robbers.

▼ ▼ ▼

The sage manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech.

▼ ▼ ▼

Therefore the sage holds in his embrace the one thing of humility, and manifests it to all the world. He is free from self-display, and therefore he shines; from self-assertion, and therefore he

is distinguished; from self-boasting, and therefore his merit is acknowledged; from self-complacency, and therefore he acquires superiority. It is because he is thus free from striving that therefore no one in the world is able to strive with him.

▼ ▼ ▼

When gold and jade fill the hall, their possessor cannot keep them safe. When wealth and honors lead to arrogance, this brings its evil on itself. When the work is done, and one's name is becoming distinguished, to withdraw into obscurity is the way of Heaven.

### THE IDEAL GOVERNMENT

A state may be ruled by measures of correction;<sup>4</sup> weapons of war may be used with crafty dexterity; but the kingdom is made one's own only by freedom from action and purpose.

How do I know that it is so? By these facts: — In the kingdom the multiplication of prohibitive enactments increases the poverty of the people; the more implements to add to their profit that the people have, the greater disorder is there in the state and clan; the more acts of crafty dexterity that men possess, the more do strange contrivances appear; the more display there is of legislation, the more thieves and robbers there are.

Therefore a sage has said, "I will do nothing, and the people will be transformed of themselves; I will be fond of keeping still, and the people will of themselves become correct. I will take no trouble about it, and the people will of themselves become rich; I will manifest no ambition, and the people will of themselves attain to the primitive simplicity."

<sup>2</sup>According to the Confucians, careful study and emulation of the virtues of the past is the primary avenue to harmony.

<sup>3</sup>These first two sentences reject the Confucian values of wisdom (saintliness), knowledge, human-heartedness, and righteousness, all of which, according to the Confucians,

will result in *filial piety* (proper devotion to one's parents and ancestors). See the introduction to source 24 for further discussion of the history of this Confucian principle. <sup>4</sup>This aphorism rejects the principles and methods of Legalism (see source 25).

▼ ▼ ▼

Not to value and employ men of superior ability is the way to keep the people from rivalry among themselves; not to prize articles which are difficult to procure is the way to keep them from becoming thieves; not to show them what is likely to excite their desires is the way to keep their minds from disorder.

Therefore the sage, in the exercise of his government, empties their minds, fills their bellies, weakens their wills, and strengthens their bones.

He constantly tries to keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act on it. When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.





## Rome Viewed from the Underworld



### ▼ Virgil, *THE AENEID*

Due to its victory over Carthage in the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.E.), the Roman Republic emerged as the major power in the Mediterranean and an empire in fact, if not in name. Rome's acquisition of an empire had major repercussions at home, and the resultant strains triggered more than a century of class discord and civil war. The civil wars ended in 30 B.C.E., when Octavian, the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar (ca. 100–44 B.C.E.), defeated Mark Antony and became sole master of the Roman World. In 27 B.C.E. the Senate accorded him the title *Augustus* (Revered One), implying he possessed divine authority. Posterity remembers Octavian as *Caesar Augustus* (63 B.C.E.–14 C.E.), Rome's first emperor and the man who created and presided over the first generation of the *Pax Romana*, or Roman Peace.

The significance of the *Pax Romana* was not lost on Augustus's contemporaries, not that there was much danger of anyone overlooking it given Augustus's policy of using his age's leading artists and intellectuals to trumpet his accomplishments. Of these publicists of the Roman Peace, none was more significant than Publius Vergilius Maro (70–19 B.C.E.), better known as *Virgil*. Virgil was simply classical Rome's greatest poet, and his most important creation, the *Aeneid*, was an epic that centered on nothing less than the divinely ordained destiny of Rome. The poem tells the story of the warrior-hero Aeneas, a refugee from Troy, whose settlement in Italy, following a long series of trials and troubled travels, would lead ultimately to the foundation of Rome. As the title and topic might suggest, Virgil borrowed liberally from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but he never slavishly imitated his Greek models. Rather, Virgil crafted a unique Latin masterpiece that deserves recognition on its own merits as one of the Ancient World's greatest epics. Virgil devoted the last ten years of his life to the *Aeneid*, but as he lay dying he left instructions that it should be burned, believing it needed three additional years of revision and polishing. Happily, Augustus countermanded the deathbed wishes of this poetic perfectionist.

Our source comes from Book 6, the pivotal point of this epic in twelve books. Aeneas has just reached Italy. There, accompanied by the Sibyl of Cumae, an inspired prophetess of the god Apollo, he enters the Underworld to consult the spirit of his father Anchises. We begin with Aeneas and the Sibyl, having passed by Tartarus, the place of torment for the wicked, arriving at Elysium.

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does Virgil's Underworld differ from that of Gilgamesh (Chapter 1, source 1)? From that of Homer (Chapter 2, source 12)?
2. Can you discover any possible influences on Virgil's religious thought? Review Chapter 3 in addressing this question.
3. What does your answer to question 2 allow you to infer about cross-cultural influences in the Augustan Age?
4. What do the last two excerpts from this source suggest about the Roman self-image in the Age of Augustus?

They arrived at a land of joy, the green gardens and blessed abodes of the Blissful Groves. Here a fuller air clothes the meadows with a violet luminescence, and they have their own sun and starlight. Some exercise their limbs on the grassy playing fields, contend in sports, and wrestle on the yellow sand. Others beat out dances with their feet and sing songs. . . . Here is a band of men who incurred wounds fighting for their fatherland. Here are they who remained pure in their priesthood as long as they lived. Here are they who were true poets and who spoke in ways worthy of Phoebus.<sup>1</sup> And here are they who improved life by the arts of their inventions. Here are they who merited by their service remembrance before all others. The brows of all are encircled with snowy-white garlands. . . .

But Father Anchises, deep in the verdant valley, was surveying with intent mind the imprisoned souls that were to ascend to the light above, and by chance was counting numbers of men — his beloved descendants, their fates and their fortunes, their ways and their works.

And when he saw Aeneas coming toward him across the flowery meadow, he eagerly stretched out both hands, while tears flowed down his cheeks and a cry slipped from his mouth. "Have you come at last, and has the devotion that your father has expected of you<sup>2</sup> conquered the path of adversity? My son, is it given to me to gaze on your face and to hear and respond in familiar

speech? . . ." Aeneas replied: "Your shade, Father, your sad shade, appearing to me so often drove me to steer toward these portals. My ships are at anchor on the Tyrrhenian Sea.<sup>3</sup> Grant that I might clasp your hand, grant it, Father, and do not withdraw from our embrace." While thus speaking, his face was drenched with copious tears. Three times there he tried to put his arms about his neck; three times the shade, embraced in vain, escaped out of his hands like weightless winds and even more so like a winged dream.

And now Aeneas sees within a hidden valley a secluded grove, rustling forest thickets, and the River Lethe flowing past peaceful dwellings. Around it hovered peoples and individuals beyond count. . . . Startled by this sudden vision, the uncomprehending Aeneas asks for an account: What is that river over there? Who are those people who throng on its banks in such great numbers? Father Anchises then answers: "Spirits to whom Fate owes another body drink the soothing waters of deep amnesia at the River Lethe's stream. Indeed, for quite a while I have wanted to tell you about these and show them to you face to face and to count the offspring of my descendants, so that you might rejoice with me the more for having reached Italy." "Father, must we think that some souls, soaring upwards, travel from here to the upper world and once again return to bodily fetters? Why do these sad souls have such a dreadful longing for the light of

<sup>1</sup>Phoebus Apollo, the god of prophecy and of poetry.

<sup>2</sup>Throughout this story Aeneas has consistently exhibited the virtue of *pietas*, or devotion to duty.

<sup>3</sup>That portion of the Mediterranean separating the islands of Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily from the Italian Peninsula.

day?"<sup>4</sup> "Surely, I will tell you, my son, and I will not hold you in suspense," replies Anchises, and he lays everything out in order, one by one.

"First of all, one intrinsic Spirit sustains the heavens and the Earth and the watery expanses, the shining globe of the moon and the Titanian stars,<sup>5</sup> and one Mind flows through all its parts, drives the entire entity, and mingles with the mighty structure. From them<sup>6</sup> are generated humanity and beasts, the lives of flying creatures, and those monsters that the sea contains beneath its marbled surface. Fire is their life force and their seeds originate in Heaven,<sup>7</sup> inasmuch as sinful bodies do not hamper them, and earthly frames and mortal limbs do not render them sluggish. Bodies are the cause of fear and desire, of sorrow and joy, and souls cannot discern the light of Heaven when shut up in the gloom of a dark dungeon.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, on the very last day when life has fled, all evil and all the ills of the body do not totally pass from these sad souls,<sup>9</sup> for it must be the case that many evils, long set hard, are deeply engrained within them in ways beyond understanding. As a consequence, they are disciplined with punishments and pay the penalty for old evil ways. Some are hung, helplessly suspended before the winds; from others the stain of guilt is washed away under a swirling flood or burned off by fire.<sup>10</sup> Each of us endures his own ghost.<sup>11</sup> Then we are released to wander through wide Elysium. A few of us possess the Fields of Happiness until, once the cycle of time is com-

pleted, the passing days have removed the hardened stain and have left unsoiled the ethereal sentient spirit and the fire of pure air.<sup>12</sup> The god summons all these in a vast procession to the River Lethe once the wheel of time has revolved a full thousand years, so that they might revisit the vaulted world above<sup>13</sup> without memories and might begin to wish to return to bodily forms."<sup>14</sup>

Anchises finished speaking and drew his son, and the Sibyl along with him, into the midst of the crowded and murmuring throng. He took up a position on a knoll from where he could scan the entire long line and recognize their faces as they came.

"Come now, I will teach you about your destiny. I will make clear by my words what glory will eventually befall the progeny of Dardanus<sup>15</sup> and what sort of descendants will spring from Italian stock<sup>16</sup> — souls of renown who shall inherit our name. . . .

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▷ Anchises begins to point out the souls of the great men, still awaiting rebirth, who will create Rome and bring it to glory. After describing Romulus, the son of Mars (the god of War) and founder of Rome, Anchises abandons a strict chronological sequence and jumps to Caesar Augustus, the second founder of Rome.

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"This man, this is he whom so often you heard promised to you. This is Caesar Augustus, son of a god,<sup>17</sup> who shall again establish a Golden

<sup>4</sup>These are the words of a world-weary Aeneas who has been exhausted by the trials he has undergone due to his devotion to duty.

<sup>5</sup>The sun and the stars.

<sup>6</sup>Spirit and Mind.

<sup>7</sup>Spirit and Mind spring from the primal element of fire (see note 10), and their seeds are particles of divine fire born out of heavenly air.

<sup>8</sup>The dungeon of the sinful, mortal body.

<sup>9</sup>Here Anchises picks up Aeneas's reference to "sad souls" and gives the term new meaning.

<sup>10</sup>In other words, sinful souls are cleansed in this purgatory by air, water, or fire, three of the four primal elements of the universe (the other being Earth). Irredeemably evil souls are condemned to eternal torment in Tartarus, the place that Aeneas just passed on his way to Elysium.

<sup>11</sup>Each soul suffers in accord with its unique imperfections.

By using the term "we," Anchises implied he also has undergone this purgation.

<sup>12</sup>The soul (the sentient spirit) has been returned to its primal purity — the fire and air from which it was generated. See what Anchises says about the origins of Spirit and Mind (note 7).

<sup>13</sup>Earth, which is vaulted by the heavens.

<sup>14</sup>Were they to remember the miseries of life and the process of purgation they underwent after death, they would not want to return.

<sup>15</sup>The mythical founder of Troy.

<sup>16</sup>Aeneas's future descendants, who will bear both his Trojan blood and the blood of Lavinia, his Italian wife-to-be.

<sup>17</sup>Caesar Augustus was the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar, who had been declared a god after his death. Aeneas himself was half divine; his mother was Venus, the goddess of love.



Age in Latium<sup>18</sup> amid the fields where Saturn once ruled.<sup>19</sup> He shall extend his rule beyond the Garamantians<sup>20</sup> and the Indians. His dominion will extend beyond the paths of the zodiac and of the sun.<sup>21</sup> . . . Even now, in anticipation of his coming as prophesied by the oracles, the kingdoms of the Caspian Sea<sup>22</sup> and the region around Lake Moetis<sup>23</sup> shudder in horror, and the seven mouths of the Nile<sup>24</sup> tremble in terror.<sup>25</sup> Yes, not even Alcides<sup>26</sup> strode over such a space of earth. . . . Do we still hesitate to assert our valor by action, or does fear forbid our settling on Italian soil?<sup>27</sup>

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▷ Anchises returns to a chronological description of the shades of future Roman heroes, beginning

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<sup>18</sup>The region surrounding Rome, where the Latin people lived.

<sup>19</sup>According to Roman tradition, the Golden Age of Saturn was a primeval era of purity and simplicity — virtues that made Rome great. Saturn, originally an Italian god of agriculture, was deposed by his son Jupiter, king of the gods. Thereupon, Saturn fled to Latium, where he became its king, establishing a society that lacked weapons, money, walled cities, and all similar corrupting influences. During this era the fruits of the soil were gained without toil.

<sup>20</sup>A people of Northeast Africa.

<sup>21</sup>Beyond the known world.

with Numa, an ancient king of Rome and its first lawgiver. After pointing out Fabius Maximus, whose delaying tactics saved Rome in the dark days of the Second Punic War, Anchises sums up the essence of Rome's unique genius:

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"Others,<sup>28</sup> for so I believe, shall hammer out more delicately breathing likenesses from bronze and draw forth living faces from marble. Others shall plead their causes better, plot with a gauge the movement of the heavens, and describe the rising of the stars. But, Roman, remember that you must rule nations by your dominion. These will be your arts: to crown peace with civilization, to show mercy to the conquered, and to tame the proud by war."

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<sup>22</sup>The Parthian Empire ruled the region around the Caspian Sea.

<sup>23</sup>A reference to the steppe peoples north of the Black Sea.

<sup>24</sup>The Nile Delta.

<sup>25</sup>A reference to his victory over the forces of Cleopatra VII and Marc Antony at Actium.

<sup>26</sup>Another name for the legendary hero Hercules. Like Hercules, Augustus performed civilizing tasks and was a mortal who was destined to become a god.

<sup>27</sup>These two questions are directed to Aeneas: After seeing Augustus, can he have any hesitation as to following his destiny?

<sup>28</sup>Namely, the Greeks.

## Establishing an Imperial Confucian Academy



▼ *Sima Qian,*

### *THE RECORDS OF THE GRAND HISTORIAN*

During its short existence the Qin Dynasty had experimented with various procedures for recruiting competent and loyal officials. The early emperors of Former Han and their chief ministers continued the search for rational ways of discovering persons of ability. In 124 B.C.E. Emperor Han Wudi established an important precedent when he decreed that proven knowledge of one of the Confucian Classics would be a basis for promotion into the imperial civil service and created a rudimentary imperial academy for educating aspiring scholar-officials in the various fields of Confucian learning. By this act he set in motion a process whereby centuries later Confucianism became the empire's ideological framework.

What began modestly as an academy designed to educate fifty young men became an institution that numbered upward of thirty thousand students in the last days of Later Han. Relatively few of these scholars, however, were called to the emperor's service, and the examinations Han Wudi initiated were irregularly held under his Han successors. Government office was still largely the privilege of the landed aristocracy right to the end of the Later Han Era. Only in the age of the *Tang* Dynasty (618–907) did a regular system of civil service examinations emerge as a consequence of the imperial court's successful attempt to break the power of the traditional landed aristocracy by creating a new class of salaried imperial officials. By the early tenth century education in all the Confucian Classics was virtually the only route to civil office. China had not only established the world's first-known civil service examination system, it had also, for the most part, developed a system that conferred civil authority on a class of people who shared a common education and philosophy. This class of Confucian *literarchs* (literary rulers) would, more often than not, control China into the early twentieth century.

In the following selection, Sima Qian, one of Former Han's greatest Confucian scholars (whom we saw in Chapter 4, source 25), traces the vicissitudes of Confucianism as a practiced political doctrine from the days of Master Kong down to the time of the contemporary emperor, Han Wudi.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What vicissitudes did the school of Confucius experience in the four centuries following his death?
2. How were students selected for admission to the emperor's academy, and what sort of person was to be admitted?
3. What do these standards for admission suggest about the values and purposes of Confucian education in the era of Han Wudi?
4. It has been said that by approving this proposal, Han Wudi joined Confucianism with Legalism. Do you agree? Why or why not?

5. Consider what Confucius says in *The Analects* about government and the superior man (Chapter 4, source 24). How do you think he would respond to this imperial edict?

After the death of Confucius, his band of seventy disciples broke up and scattered among the feudal lords,<sup>1</sup> the more important ones becoming tutors and high ministers to the rulers, the lesser ones acting as friends and teachers to the lower officials, while some went into retirement and were never seen again. . . . Among the feudal lords, however, only Marquis Wen of Wei had any fondness for literature. Conditions continued to deteriorate until the time of the First Emperor of the Qin; the empire was divided among a number of states, all warring with each other, and no one had any use for the arts of the Confucians. Only in Qi and Lu<sup>2</sup> did scholars appear to carry on the teachings and save them from oblivion. During the reigns of Kings Wei and Xuan of Qi (378–323 B.C.), Mencius<sup>3</sup> and Xun Qing<sup>4</sup> and their respective groups both honored the doctrines of the Master and worked to ex-

pand and enrich them, winning prominence among the men of the time by their learning.

Then followed the twilight<sup>5</sup> days of the Qin emperor, who burned the *Odes* and *Documents* and buried the scholars alive,<sup>6</sup> and from this time on the texts of the Six Classics<sup>7</sup> of the Confucians were damaged and incomplete. . . .

Later, when Gaozu<sup>8</sup> had defeated Xiang Yu,<sup>9</sup> he marched north and surrounded the state of Lu with his troops, but the Confucian scholars of Lu went on as always, reciting and discussing their books, practicing rites and music, and never allowing the sound of strings and voices to die out.<sup>10</sup> . . . And when the Han came to power, these scholars were at last allowed to study and teach their Classics freely and to demonstrate the proper rituals. . . .

Shusun Tong<sup>11</sup> drew up the ceremonial for the Han court and was rewarded with the post of

<sup>1</sup>Autonomous local lords who had private armies during the *Age of the Warring States* (403–221 B.C.E.).

<sup>2</sup>Two of the Warring States.

<sup>3</sup>*Mencius* (the Latinized form of *Mengzi*, or Master Meng), lived from around 372 to about 289 B.C.E. and, except for Confucius, was the most important theorist in the history of Confucian philosophy. His basic doctrines were that humans are innately good and that each person has the potential to become a sage. From these two principles he evolved a political philosophy of benevolent government.

<sup>4</sup>*Master Xun Qing* (ca. 300–235 B.C.E.) was the last great philosopher in the formative age of Confucian classical thought. Unlike Confucius and Mencius, he set his ideas down systematically in a detailed book. Although he might have been the most original and systematic of the three great Confucian sages, the Chinese valued his teachings far less than those of Confucius and Mencius because he was too much of a free thinker, rejecting the existence of spirits and doubting that humans are innately good.

<sup>5</sup>“Twilight” because, in Han Confucian eyes, this brief and evil reign was more the last stage of the Zhou Era than a full-fledged dynasty itself. It had not followed the classic pattern, established in the first three dynasties, of vigorous growth, maturity, and decay (see the *Mandate of Heaven*, Chapter 1, source 5).

<sup>6</sup>In 213 Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi issued an edict banning essentially all non-Legalist literature. According to the traditional account, 460 scholars were buried alive for refus-

ing to hand over copies of the Confucian Classics. Recently, however, at least one historian has questioned whether the scholars were executed by inhumation or simply killed by other means.

<sup>7</sup>*The Classic of History* (Chapter 1, source 5), *The Classic of Odes* (source 6), *The Analects* (Chapter 4, source 24), *The Classic of Changes*, *The Classic of Rites*, and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*. *The Classic of Changes*, or *Yi Jing*, is a work of divination that enjoys popularity today among Western readers; *The Classic of Rites* is a compilation of proper rituals. See note 19 for a description of *The Spring and Autumn Annals*. Although *The Analects* always remained a revered book of Confucian wisdom, the other five Classics assumed greater importance during the Age of Later Han and collectively emerged as the *Wu Jing* — the core of the Confucian canon.

<sup>8</sup>*Gaozu* means “high ancestor” and was the honorific title of Liu Bang, the first Han emperor (r. 202–195 B.C.E.).

<sup>9</sup>The brilliant but erratic noble whom the commoner Liu Bang defeated in a contest for the empire after the fall of Qin.

<sup>10</sup>Confucians emphasize music for several reasons: This art from the revered past creates harmony out of dissonance, soothes the hearer’s troubled spirit, and raises the mind to a higher plane.

<sup>11</sup>A Confucian scholar who served both the Qin and early Han rulers.



master of ritual, while all the other scholars who assisted him were likewise given preferential treatment in the government. The emperor sighed over the neglected state of learning and would have done more to encourage its revival, but at the time there was still considerable turmoil within the empire and the region within the four seas had not yet been set at peace. Likewise, during the reigns of Emperor Zu<sup>12</sup> and Empress Lü<sup>13</sup> there was still no leisure to attend to the matter of government schools. Moreover, the high officials at this time were all military men who had won their distinction in battle.

With the accession of Emperor Wen,<sup>14</sup> Confucian scholars began little by little to be summoned and employed in the government, although Emperor Wen himself rather favored the Legalist teachings on personnel organization and control. Emperor Jing<sup>15</sup> made no effort to employ Confucian scholars, and his mother, Empress Dowager Dou,<sup>16</sup> was an advocate of the teachings of the Yellow Emperor<sup>17</sup> and Laozi. Thus various scholars were appointed to fill the posts of court councilor and to answer questions, but they had no prospects of advancement.

When the present emperor came to the throne there were a number of enlightened Confucian scholars . . . at court. The emperor was much attracted by their ideas and accordingly sent out a summons for scholars of moral worth and literary ability to take service in the government.

After Empress Dowager Dou passed away, the marquises of Wuan, Tianfan,<sup>18</sup> became chancellor.

He rejected the doctrines of the Daoists, the Legalists, and the other philosophical schools, and invited several hundred Confucian scholars and literary men to take service in the government. Among them was Gongsun Hong who, because of his knowledge of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*,<sup>19</sup> advanced from the rank of commoner to that of one of the three highest ministers in the government and was installed as marquis of Pingjin. Scholars throughout the empire saw which way the wind was blowing and did all they could to follow his example.

As a scholar official, Gongsun Hong, who held the post of imperial secretary, was disturbed that the teachings of Confucius were being neglected and not put into greater practice and he therefore submitted the following memorial:<sup>20</sup>

The chancellor and the imperial secretary wish to make this statement. Your Majesty has issued an edict which reads:

"I have heard that the people are to be guided by rites and led to the practice of virtue through music, and that the institution of marriage is the basis of the family. Yet at the present time rites have fallen into disuse and music has declined, a fact which grieves me deeply. Therefore I have invited men of outstanding moral worth and wide learning from all over the empire to come and take service at court. Let the officials in charge of ritual encourage learning, hold discussions, and gather all the information they can to encourage the revival of rites in order to act as leaders of the empire. Let the master of ritual consult with the erudites<sup>21</sup> and their

<sup>12</sup>Known as the *Filial Emperor*, he reigned from 195 to 188 B.C.E., but his mother, the Empress Dowager Lü, held all real power. See note 13.

<sup>13</sup>The widow of Han Gaozu (note 8), she ruled China as the power behind the throne between 195 and 180 B.C.E.

<sup>14</sup>Wen the Filial (c. 180–157 B.C.E.), the fourth son of Han Gaozu and the first strong emperor since his father's death fifteen years earlier.

<sup>15</sup>Wen's successor, who ruled from 157 to 141 B.C.E.

<sup>16</sup>This powerful woman, who died in 135 B.C.E., sponsored the study of Daoist teachings at the courts of her husband and son.

<sup>17</sup>See Chapter 4, source 26. This legendary predynastic Sage

Emperor was believed to be, along with Laozi, the founder of Daoism (Chapter 4, source 23).

<sup>18</sup>Maternal uncle of Han Wudi.

<sup>19</sup>A terse chronicle of events covering the period 722 to 481 B.C.E. and written from the perspective of Confucius' home state of Lu. This Confucian Classic was also believed to be authored by the Great Master. There is no reason to believe he had a hand in composing it, but apparently he studied and admired the work.

<sup>20</sup>A memorandum.

<sup>21</sup>Erudites (*boshi*) were scholar-advisors to the imperial court by virtue of the fact that each was a specialist in one of the Confucian Classics.

students on how to promote the spread of virtue in the countryside and open the way for men of outstanding talent."

In accordance with this edict we have respectfully discussed the matter with the master of ritual Kong Zang, the erudite Ping, and others, and they have told us that, according to their information, it was the custom under the Three Dynasties of antiquity to set up schools for instruction in the villages. In the Xia dynasty these were called *xiao*, in the Shang dynasty *xu*, and in the Zhou dynasty *xiang*. These schools encouraged goodness by making it known to the court and censured evil by applying punishments. Thus it was the officials of the capital who took the initiative in instructing and educating the people, and virtue spread from the court outwards to the provinces.

Now Your Majesty, manifesting supreme virtue and displaying a profound intelligence worthy to rank with that of heaven and earth, has sought to rectify human relations, encourage learning, revive the former rites, promote instruction in goodness, and open the way for men of worth so that the people of the four directions<sup>22</sup> may be swayed to virtue. This is indeed the way to lay the foundations for an era of great peace.

In earlier times, however, the instruction provided by the government was incomplete and the rites were not fully carried out. We therefore beg that the previous official system be utilized to increase the spread of instruction. In order to fill the offices of erudite we suggest that fifty additional students be selected and declared exempt from the usual labor services. The master of ritual shall be charged with the selection of these students from among men of the people who are eighteen years of age or older and who are of good character and upright behavior. In order to supply candidates for the selection, the

governors, prime ministers, heads, and magistrates of the various provinces, kingdoms, districts, marches,<sup>23</sup> and feudal cities shall recommend to the two thousand picul officials<sup>24</sup> in their respective regions any men who are fond of learning, show respect for their superiors, adhere to the teachings of the government, and honor the customs of their village, and whose actions in no way reflect discredit upon their reputations. The two thousand picul officials shall in turn make a careful examination of the men recommended; those found worthy shall then be sent in company with the local accounting officials when the latter come to the capital to make their reports, and shall there be presented to the master of ritual. They shall then receive instruction in the same manner as the regular students of the erudites.

At the end of a year, all of them shall be examined. Those who have mastered one or more of the Classics shall be assigned to fill vacancies among the scholar officials in the provinces or among the officers . . . who serve under the master of ritual. If there are any outstanding students who qualify for the post of palace attendant, the master of ritual shall present their names to the throne. In this way men of exceptional talent and ability will be brought at once to the attention of the ruler. If, on the contrary, there are any who have not applied themselves to their studies, whose ability is inferior, or who have failed to master even one Classic, they shall be summarily dismissed. In addition, if there are any among the recommending officials who have failed to carry out their duties properly, we suggest that they be punished. . . .

The emperor signified his approval of this proposal, and from this time on the number of literary men who held positions as ministers and high officials in the government increased remarkably.

<sup>22</sup>That is, throughout all China.

<sup>23</sup>Frontier regions.

<sup>24</sup>A *picul* was 133.33 pounds of grain. Every office was graded according to its annual salary, and most salaries

ranged between two thousand and one hundred piculs a year, although the emperor's chief counselor received ten thousand piculs. Salaries were paid partly in grain and partly in silk and cash equivalents.

## The Hindu Search for Divine Reality



### ▼ THE UPANISHADS

Despite the growing importance of the Brahmins, between roughly 700 and 500 B.C.E., a number of religious revolutionaries in the region of northeast India's Ganges Plain, the new demographic and cultural center of the subcontinent, created a form of spiritual literature known as the *Upanishads*.

Upanishad means "sitting down in front [of a teacher]," and these texts take the form of dialogues between teachers and pupils who seek to go beyond the Vedas in their search for ultimate wisdom. Many of the authors were probably Brahmins, but it seems clear that just as many, if not more, were Kshatriyas, which reflects not only a continuing struggle for supremacy between the two castes but also a discontentment by many Brahmins, as well as Kshatriyas, with what they perceived to be the empty formalism of brahminical rituals.

Without rejecting the ancient Vedas and brahminical sacrifices or the far-more-recent and still-evolving caste system, the upanishadic teachers took certain



concepts that were implied in the later vedic hymns, such as the “Hymn to Purusha,” and articulated a vision of an all-inclusive Being, or Ultimate Reality, called *Brahman*. More than that, they articulated a way by which anyone, regardless of caste, could attain Brahman.

As we might expect, there is a good deal of contradiction among the 108 extant upanishadic texts, yet a fundamental message binds them: Not only is there a Universal Soul, or Brahman, but the innermost essence of a person, the *atman*, or spiritual self, is one with Brahman, the True Self. Humans, therefore, are not outside Divine Reality; they are part of it. Those who wish to throw off the painful bonds of rebirth and earthly nonreality must reach that divinity within themselves.

Our first selection, which comes from the early and especially revered *Chandogya Upanishad*, presents two analogies to explain this theological message. Here we meet the conceited youth Svetaketu, who thinks that he has mastered all that he needs to know in order to win release from the shackles of life’s cycle of suffering by virtue of his twelve-year apprenticeship with Brahmin priests, who have taught him all the sacred rituals. His father, however, teaches him an additional lesson: Reality transcends the world of tangible phenomena and, yet, is attainable. The second excerpt, taken from the later but equally important *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, deals with the issue of how that spark of Brahman, the Self, which is contained within each mortal body, migrates from one body to another until it finally achieves release and rejoins the One. Here we see an early enunciation of what are becoming two essential elements of Hindu religious thought: reincarnation and the law of *karma*, or the fruits of one’s actions (see also source 17). The third selection, also from the *Brihadaranyaka*, describes the state of consciousness of a person who is on the verge of attaining release from the cycle of rebirth and union with Brahman.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does the father mean when he states, “You, Svetaketu, are it”?
2. What is the law of karma?
3. Why are souls reincarnated, and how might one advance up the ladder of caste?
4. How does one end the cycle of rebirth?
5. How important or real is this world to the soul that is returning to Brahman?
6. Why do even good and evil cease to have meaning to the soul that has found Brahman?
7. Consider the closing lines of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. What hope does this text hold out to persons of the lowest castes and even to casteless untouchables?
8. How is the upanishadic vision of Brahman a logical development from the message of the “Hymn to Purusha”?

## THE CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

There lived once Svetaketu. . . . To him his father Uddalaka . . . said: "Svetaketu, go to school; for no one belonging to our race, dear son, who, not having studied, is, as it were, a Brahmin<sup>1</sup> by birth only."

Having begun his apprenticeship when he was twelve years of age, Svetaketu returned to his father, when he was twenty-four, having then studied all the Vedas, — conceited, considering himself well-read, and stern.

His father said to him: "Svetaketu, as you are so conceited, considering yourself so well-read, and so stern, my dear, have you ever asked for that instruction by which we hear what cannot be heard, by which we perceive what cannot be perceived, by which we know what cannot be known?"

"What is that instruction, Sir?" he asked. . . .

"Fetch me . . . a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree."

"Here is one, Sir."

"Break it."

"It is broken, Sir."

"What do you see there?"

"These seeds, almost infinitesimal."

"Break one of them."

"It is broken, Sir."

"What do you see there?"

"Not anything, Sir."

The father said: "My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive there, of that very essence this great Nyagrodha tree exists.

"Believe it, my son. That which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and you, . . . Svetaketu, are it."

"Please, Sir, inform me still more," said the son.

"Be it so, my child," the father replied.

"Place this salt in water, and then wait on me in the morning."

The son did as he was commanded.

The father said to him: "Bring me the salt, which you placed in the water last night."

The son having looked for it, found it not, for, of course, it was melted.

The father said: "Taste it from the surface of the water. How is it?"

The son replied: "It is salt."

"Taste it from the middle. How is it?"

The son replied: "It is salt."

"Taste it from the bottom. How is it?"

The son replied: "It is salt."

The father said: "Throw it away and then wait on me."

He did so; but the salt exists forever.<sup>2</sup>

Then the father said: "Here also, in this body,<sup>3</sup> . . . you do not perceive the True, my son; but there indeed it is.

"That which is the subtle essence,<sup>4</sup> in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and you, Svetaketu, are it."

## THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

"And when the body grows weak through old age, or becomes weak through illness, at that time that person, after separating himself from his members, as a mango, or fig, or pippala-fruit is separated from the stalk,<sup>5</sup> hastens back again as he came, to the place from which he started, to new life. . . .

"Then both his knowledge and his work take hold of him<sup>6</sup> and his acquaintance with former things.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Note that *Brahmin* is a male gender variation of the neuter noun *Brahman*.

<sup>2</sup>The salt, although invisible, remains forever in the water.

<sup>3</sup>The human body.

<sup>4</sup>The soul, or *atman*.

<sup>5</sup>The image is of a fruit that carries the seed of new life, even as it decays.

<sup>6</sup>The law of karma, which is defined more fully later in this source.

<sup>7</sup>One's acquaintance with things in a former life explains the peculiar talents and deficiencies evident in a child.

"And as a caterpillar, after having reached the end of a blade of grass, and after having made another approach to another blade, draws itself together towards it, thus does this Self, after having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance, and after making another approach to another body, draw himself together towards it.

"And as a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold, turns it into another, newer and more beautiful shape, so does this Self, after having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance, make unto himself another, newer and more beautiful shape. . . .

"Now as a man is like this or like that, according as he acts and according as he behaves, so will he be: — a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad. He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds.

"And here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap.

"And here there is this verse: 'To whatever object a man's own mind is attached, to that he goes strenuously together with his deed; and having obtained the consequences of whatever deed he does here on earth, he returns again from that world . . . to this world of action.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>This is the law of karma, which means "action."

<sup>9</sup>By discovering and becoming one with that spark of Brahman within, the person ends the painful cycle of samsara.

<sup>10</sup>*Kandalas* were the lowest of all casteless persons. Beneath the lowly Sudra stood certain casteless persons whose inherited occupations, or subcastes (*jatis*), rendered them "un-

"So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire, who, not desiring, freed from desires, is satisfied in his desires, or desires the Self only, his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere, — being Brahman, he goes to Brahman."<sup>9</sup>

"On this there is this verse: 'When all desires which once entered his heart are undone, then does the mortal become immortal, then he obtains Brahman.'"

▼ ▼ ▼

"Now as a man, when embraced by a beloved wife, knows nothing that is without, nothing that is within, thus this person, when embraced by the intelligent Self, knows nothing that is without, nothing that is within. This indeed is his true form, in which his wishes are fulfilled, in which the Self only is his wish, in which no wish is left, — free from any sorrow.

"Then a father is not a father, a mother not a mother, the worlds not worlds, the gods not gods, the Vedas not Vedas. Then a thief is not a thief, a murderer not a murderer, a Kandala not a Kandala,<sup>10</sup> a Sramana not a Sramana,<sup>11</sup> a Tapasa not a Tapasa.<sup>12</sup> He is not followed by good, not followed by evil, for he has then overcome all the sorrows of the heart."

clean." (See Chapter 5, sources 38 and 39, for additional sources and notes that deal with the Kandalas and other subcastes.)

<sup>11</sup>A holy beggar.

<sup>12</sup>A person performing penance.



## The Path to Enlightenment



### ▼ *The Buddha, TWO LESSONS*

Many parallels exist between the legendary lives of the Mahavira and the Buddha, and several of their teachings are strikingly similar. Each rejected the sanctity of vedic literature; each spurned the religious ceremonies and authority of the Brahmins; and each denied the meaningfulness of all caste distinctions and duties. Yet a close examination of their doctrines reveals substantial differences.

Like the Mahavira, most details of the Buddha's life are uncertain. Unanimous tradition places Siddhartha Gautama's birth into a princely family residing in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal, but the written sources for his life and teachings, all of which were composed long after his time, differ as to his birth and death dates; the three strongest traditions are 624–544, 563–483, and 448–368 B.C.E. Significantly, all three agree that he lived to the age of eighty. Also like the Mahavira, tradition holds that the young prince, shrinking in horror at the many manifestations of misery in this world, fled his comfortable life and became an ascetic. Unlike the Mahavira, who found victory over karma in severe self-denial and total nonviolence, Prince Gautama found only severe disquiet. The ascetic life offered him no enlightenment as to how one might escape the sorrows of mortal existence. After abandoning extreme asceticism, Gautama achieved Enlightenment in a flash while meditating under a sacred pipal tree (see Chapter 1, source 8, seal 3). He was now the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

Legend tells us he then proceeded to share the path to Enlightenment, which he termed the *Middle Path*, by preaching a sermon in a deer park at Benares in northeastern India to five ascetics, who became his first disciples. Buddhists refer to that initial sermon as “Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Law,” which means that the Buddha had embarked on a journey (turning the wheel) on behalf of the Law of Righteousness (Dharma).

Our first text is a reconstruction of that sermon. The second document is a dialogue between the Buddha and one of his disciples. Known as “The Lesson on Questions That Tend Not to Edification,” it deals with issues on which the Buddha refused to speculate.

Both sources are preserved in a body of Buddhist literature known as the *Pali Canon*, which contains the most authentic texts relating to the Buddha and his doctrine known to exist today. Assembled as an authoritative collection, or *canon*, of orally transmitted remembrances during the period between the Buddha's death and the late third century B.C.E., the texts were probably not written down in the form in which we have them until the late first century B.C.E. Composed in Pali, a language that is close to classical Sanskrit, they first appeared in the island of Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka) and traveled from there to Burma and Thailand, where they became the core canonical books of the branch of Buddhism known as *Theravada* (see Chapter 6). Each text is located in one of three groupings, or “baskets,” a designation whose origin traces back to a time when the palm-leaf manuscripts of the texts were kept in three separate baskets. For this reason the entire

collection is known as the *Tipitaka*, or *Three Baskets*. Our first document comes from *The Discipline Basket*, which consists of a number of books that concern the discipline, or regimented life, of Buddhist monks and nuns. The second source comes from *The Basket of Discourses*, which contains a series of books that supposedly contain all of the Buddha's sermons and lessons.

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is the Middle Path? Why is it, according to the Buddha, the proper path to Enlightenment?
2. What are the *Four Noble Truths*, and how does one's total comprehension and acceptance of them lead to *Nirvana*, or escape from the cycle of suffering?
3. Buddhists call the law taught by the Buddha *Dharma*. How does Buddhist Dharma differ from that of Brahminical Hinduism?
4. What issues or questions did the Buddha refuse to consider? Why? What does his refusal to speculate on these issues suggest about his doctrine?
5. What assumptions and values do Brahminical Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism share? Where do they differ? Which are more significant, the similarities or the differences? What conclusions follow from your answers?

## SETTING IN MOTION THE WHEEL OF THE LAW

And the Blessed One thus addressed the five Bhikkhus.<sup>1</sup> "There are two extremes, O Bhikkhus, which he who has given up the world ought to avoid. What are these two extremes? A life given to pleasures, devoted to pleasures and lusts: this is degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble, and profitless; and a life given to mortifications: this is painful, ignoble, and profitless. By avoiding these two extremes, O Bhikkhus, the Tathagata<sup>2</sup>

has gained the knowledge of the Middle Path which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to the Sambodhi,<sup>3</sup> to Nirvana.<sup>4</sup>

"Which, O Bhikkhus, is this Middle Path the knowledge of which the Tathagata has gained, which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to the Sambodhi, to Nirvana? It is the Holy Eightfold Path, namely, Right Belief,<sup>5</sup> Right Aspiration,<sup>6</sup> Right Speech,<sup>7</sup> Right Conduct,<sup>8</sup> Right Means of Livelihood,<sup>9</sup> Right Endeavor,<sup>10</sup> Right Memory,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ascetics. The term later was used to refer to Buddhism's mendicant monks (see source 20).

<sup>2</sup>One of the Buddha's titles, its derivation is not totally clear. It seems to mean "He who has arrived at the Truth."

<sup>3</sup>Total Enlightenment.

<sup>4</sup>The state of release from the limitations of existence and rebirth. The word means literally "extinction," in the sense that one has extinguished all worldly desires. In essence, it is Buddhahood. Like the Hindu Brahma-nirvana, Buddhist Nirvana is a state of absolute being and nonbeing.

<sup>5</sup>Understanding the truth about the universality of suffering, knowing the path leading to its extinction, and realizing it is attainable.

<sup>6</sup>Preparing for the journey to Enlightenment by freeing one's mind of ill will, sensuous desire, and cruelty.

<sup>7</sup>Abstaining from lying, harsh language, and gossip.

<sup>8</sup>Acting honestly by avoiding killing, stealing, and unlawful sexual intercourse.

<sup>9</sup>Avoiding any occupation that harms directly or indirectly any living being.

<sup>10</sup>Going beyond simply acting morally, a person now avoids all distractions and temptations of the flesh.

<sup>11</sup>Now that one has put aside distractions, one focuses the entire mind fully on important issues, such as life, suffering, and death.

Right Meditation.<sup>12</sup> This, O Bhikkhus, is the Middle Path the knowledge of which the Tathagata has gained, which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to the Sambodhi, to Nirvana.

"This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering: Birth is suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate, is suffering; Separation from objects we love, is suffering; not to obtain what we desire, is suffering. Briefly, . . . clinging to existence is suffering.

"This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cause of suffering: Thirst, that leads to rebirth, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. This thirst is threefold, namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity.

"This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering: it ceases with the complete cessation of this thirst, — a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion — with the abandoning of this thirst, with the doing away with it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.

"This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering: that Holy Eightfold Path, that is to say, Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavor, Right Memory, Right Meditation. . . .

"As long, O Bhikkhus, as I did not possess with perfect purity this true knowledge and insight into these four Noble Truths . . . so long, O Bhikkhus, I knew that I had not yet obtained the highest, absolute Sambodhi in the world of men and gods. . . .

"But since I possessed, O Bhikkhus, with perfect purity this true knowledge and insight into these four Noble Truths . . . then I knew, O Bhikkhus, that I had obtained the highest, universal Sambodhi. . . .

"And this knowledge and insight arose in my mind: The emancipation of my mind cannot be lost; this is my last birth; hence I shall not be born again!"

## QUESTIONS THAT TEND NOT TO EDIFICATION

Thus I have heard.

On certain occasion the Blessed One<sup>13</sup> was dwelling at Savatthi in Jetavana monastery in Anathapindika's Park. Now it happened to the venerable Malunkyaputta,<sup>14</sup> being in seclusion and plunged in meditation, that a consideration presented itself to his mind as follows:

"These theories that the Blessed One has left unexplained, has set aside and rejected — that the world is eternal, that the world is not eternal, that the world is finite, that the world is infinite, that the soul and the body are identical, that the soul is one thing and the body another, that the saint<sup>15</sup> exists after death, that the saint does not exist after death, that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death — these the Blessed One does not explain to me. And the fact that the Blessed One does not explain them to me does not please me nor suit me. Therefore I will draw near to the Blessed One and inquire of him concerning this matter. If the Blessed One will explain them to me, . . . I will lead the religious life under the Blessed One. If the Blessed One will not explain them to me, . . . I will abandon religious training and return to the lower life of a layman."

Then the venerable Malunkyaputta arose in the evening from his seclusion, and drew near to where the Blessed One was; and having drawn near and greeted the Blessed One, he sat down respectfully at one side. And seated respectfully at one side, the venerable Malunkyaputta spoke to the Blessed One as follows:

<sup>12</sup>Total discipline of the mind, body, and spirit leading to a state of absolute awareness that transcends consciousness.

<sup>13</sup>The Buddha.

<sup>14</sup>One of the Buddha's disciples.

<sup>15</sup>An *arabat*, or "one worthy of reverence," who has achieved the fourth and highest stage leading to Nirvana (see source 20, note 6). The title is also spelled *arabant* and *arbat*.



"Reverend Sir, it happened to me, as I was just now in seclusion and plunged in meditation, that a consideration presented itself to my mind, as follows: 'These theories that the Blessed One has left unexplained, has set aside and rejected — that the world is eternal, that the world is not eternal . . . that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death — these the Blessed One does not explain to me. And the fact that the Blessed One does not explain them to me does not please me nor suit me. I will draw near to the Blessed One and inquire of him concerning this matter. If the Blessed One will explain to me, either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, in that case I will lead the religious life under the Blessed One. If the Blessed One will not explain to me, either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death, in that case I will abandon religious training and return to the lower life of a layman.'

"If the Blessed One knows that the world is eternal, let the Blessed One explain to me that the world is eternal; if the Blessed One knows that the world is not eternal, let the Blessed One explain to me that the world is not eternal. If the Blessed One does not know either that the world is eternal or that the world is not eternal, the only upright thing for one who does not know, or who has not that insight, is to say, 'I do not know; I have not that insight.'"

"Pray Malunkyauputta, did I ever say to you, 'Come, Malunkyauputta, lead the religious life under me, and I will explain to you either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death'?"

"No, indeed, Reverend Sir."

"Or did you ever say to me, 'Reverend Sir, I will lead the religious life under the Blessed One, on condition that the Blessed One explain to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death'?"

"No, indeed, Reverend Sir." . . .

"That being the case, vain man, whom are you so angrily denouncing?"

"Malunkyauputta, any one who should say, 'I will not lead the religious life under the Blessed One until the Blessed One shall explain to me either that the world is eternal. Or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death'; — that person would die, Malunkyauputta, before the Tathagata had ever explained this to him.

"It is as if, Malunkyauputta, a man had been wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends and companions, his relatives and kinsfolk, were to procure for him a physician or surgeon; and the sick man were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learned whether the man who wounded me belonged to the warrior caste, or to the Brahmin caste, or to the agricultural caste, or to the menial caste.'

"Or again he were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learned the name of the man who wounded me, and to what clan he belongs.'

"Or again he were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learned whether the man who wounded me was tall, or short, or of the middle height.'

"Or again he were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learned whether the man who wounded me was black, or dusky, or of a yellow skin.'

"Or again he were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learned whether the man who wounded me was from this or that village, or town, or city.' . . .

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▷ Many similar possibilities are mentioned.

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"That man would die, Malunkyauputta, without ever having learned this.

"In exactly the same way, Malunkyauputta, any one who should say, 'I will not lead the religious life under the Blessed One until the Blessed One

shall explain to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death'; — that person would die, Malunkyaputta, before the Tathagata had ever explained this to him.

"The religious life, Malunkyaputta, does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal; nor does the religious life, Malunkyaputta, depend on the dogma that the world is not eternal. Whether the dogma obtain, Malunkyaputta, that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, there still remain birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair, for the extinction of which in the present life I am prescribing. . . .

"Accordingly, Malunkyaputta, bear always in mind what it is that I have not explained, and what it is that I have explained. And what, Malunkyaputta, have I not explained? I have not explained, Malunkyaputta, that the world is eternal; I have not explained that the world is not eternal; I have not explained that the world is finite; I have not explained that the world is infinite; I have not explained that the soul and the body are identical; I have not explained that the soul is one thing and the body another; I have not explained that the saint exists after death; I have not explained that the saint does not exist

after death; I have not explained that the saint both exists and does not exist after death; I have not explained that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death. And why, Malunkyaputta, have I not explained this? Because, Malunkyaputta, this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana; therefore I have not explained it.

"And what, Malunkyaputta, have I explained? Misery, Malunkyaputta, have I explained; the origin of misery have I explained; the cessation of misery have I explained; and the path leading to the cessation of misery have I explained. And why, Malunkyaputta, have I explained this? Because, Malunkyaputta, this does profit, has to do with the fundamentals of religion, and tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana; therefore have I explained it. Accordingly, Malunkyaputta, bear always in mind what it is that I have not explained, and what it is that I have explained."

Thus the Blessed One spoke and, delighted, the venerable Malunkyaputta applauded the speech of the Blessed One.





## The Path to Righteousness: The Law or Faith?



### ▼ *Saint Paul, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS*

Our earliest Christian sources are not the Gospels but rather the *epistles*, or letters, that Saint Paul (ca. 3 B.C.E.–64 or 67 C.E.) wrote to a number of Christian communities. Paul, or to give him his Hebrew name, *Saul*, was a Hellenized Jew and rabbinical scholar from Tarsus in Asia Minor and has often been called *the second founder of Christianity*. Prior to his becoming a Christian, Paul was a member of the Jewish elite of the eastern Mediterranean. A Roman citizen, which was rare for Jews of his day, he studied under the leading pharisaical rabbi of his day, became a noted Pharisee himself, and probably was elevated to membership in the Sanhedrin, Judaism's supreme religious and judicial body. Converted dramatically to Christianity by a blinding revelation while traveling to Damascus in Syria in the pursuit of Christians whom he was persecuting, Paul became the leading opponent of certain Christian conservatives who wished to keep Christianity within the boundaries of Judaism. From roughly 47 to his death in Rome in either 64 or 67 (ancient authorities differ on the date), Paul was an indefatigable missionary, converting gentiles and Jews alike throughout the Mediterranean region. Most important of all, Paul transformed Jesus' messianic message into a faith centering on Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Paul developed his distinctive theology in his epistles, his only extant writings. Although each epistle was addressed to a specific group of Christians and often dealt with local issues, they were revered as authoritative pronouncements of general interest for all believers. As a result, copies were circulated, and in time some of his letters (as well as some Paul never composed but that were ascribed to him) were incorporated into the body of scriptural books known to Christians as the *New Testament* (the *Old Testament* being the pre-Christian, or Jewish, portion of the Bible).

Around 57, probably while residing in Corinth, Greece, Paul planned to establish a mission in Spain and decided to make Rome his base of operations. In preparation, he wrote to the Christians at Rome to inform them of his plans and to instruct them in the faith. The result was the *Epistle to the Romans*, the most fully articulated expression of Paul's theology of salvation.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Paul, who was Jesus?
2. This epistle centers on the issue of how one becomes righteous in the eyes of God. According to Paul, the former Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, can the Law of Moses or any other body of law put one right with God? Why or why not? What role does faith play in putting one right with God? Faith in what or whom?
3. For Paul, what two virtues, or qualities, must dominate a Christian's life?
4. What do you infer from the evidence about the role of women in the early Church?
5. Like Second Isaiah (Chapter 3, source 22), Paul believes that God has a master plan for all humanity. How does Paul's understanding of that plan differ from that of his sixth-century B.C.E. predecessor?
6. Compare this epistle with the Sermon on the Mount. Do they agree, disagree, or complement one another? Be specific.
7. What parallels can you discover between Christian devotion to Jesus, as taught by Paul, and similar contemporary forms of piety and belief in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions? In answering this question, consider the sources in Chapter 6.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle,<sup>1</sup> set apart for the Gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the Gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David<sup>2</sup> according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,

including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ;

"To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: . . . I am eager to preach the Gospel to you also who are in Rome.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.<sup>3</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." . . . For we hold that

<sup>1</sup>Paul was not one of the original Twelve Apostles, Jesus' closest companions. He claimed apostolic status because he believed he had been miraculously called and converted by the Risen Christ, who appeared to him in a vision. Some of the close friends and earliest followers of Jesus were reluctant to recognize Paul as an apostle.

<sup>2</sup>The prophetic tradition maintained that the Messiah would

be descended from the line of King David (see Maimonides, Chapter 6, source 47). Consequently, Christian Jews stressed Jesus' Davidic lineage.

<sup>3</sup>Greek means any non-Jew, or gentile, because Greek was the common tongue of educated people in the eastern half of the Roman Empire.

a man is justified<sup>4</sup> by faith apart from works of law.<sup>5</sup> Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of gentiles also? Yes, of gentiles also, since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised<sup>6</sup> on the ground of their faith and the uncircumcised because of their faith. . . . The promise to Abraham<sup>7</sup> and his descendants, that they should inherit the world, did not come through the Law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the Law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. . . . That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants — not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations.” . . .

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. . . . God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. . . . There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. . . .

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction be-

tween Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For, “every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” . . .

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. . . . Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” No, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. . . .

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law. . . .

I commend to you to our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae,<sup>8</sup> that you may

<sup>4</sup>Made just, or righteous, in the eyes of God.

<sup>5</sup>The Law of Judaism.

<sup>6</sup>The Law of Moses prescribes circumcision for all Jewish males; gentiles are, therefore, *the uncircumcised*.

<sup>7</sup>The ancient patriarch from whom all Jews were descended and with whom YHWH entered into a covenant.

<sup>8</sup>A community in the Greek Peloponnese. *Deaconesses* and their male counterparts, *deacons*, were assistants to the *presbyters* (elders) who supervised the various churches. The duties of these assistants consisted of baptizing, preaching, and dispensing charity.



receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila,<sup>9</sup> my fellow workers

in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also all the churches of the gentiles give thanks; greet also the church in their house.

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<sup>9</sup>A married couple of Hellenized Jewish-Christians who figured prominently in the Christian community of Rome. Prisca was the wife; Aquila the husband.

# Becoming Spiritually Perfect



## ▼ THE GOSPEL OF SAINT MATTHEW

Tradition ascribes authorship of the *Gospels*, the four major accounts of Jesus of Nazareth's life and teachings, to authors known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The early Christian Church believed that Matthew had been one of Jesus' Twelve *Apostles*, or major companions, and accepted his Gospel as the authoritative remembrances of a divinely inspired author. Modern scholarship dates the work to the period around 85 or 90, or approximately fifty-five to sixty years after Jesus' ministry. Its author appears to have been a Christian of Antioch in Syria and possibly a disciple of the Apostle Matthew, but probably not the apostle himself. The author clearly was trained in the Jewish rabbinical tradition but was equally comfortable with the Greek language and Hellenistic culture, and he seems to have addressed his Gospel to a cosmopolitan Christian community made up of former Jews and gentiles.

The central theme of the Gospel of Matthew is that Jesus is the Messiah, the fulfillment of the promises made by God through Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. More than that, as the promised Messiah, Jesus is the Son of God. For Matthew, Second Isaiah was the greatest of the prophets, the one who had most clearly foretold Jesus' mission of salvation and who had preached that the universal reign of the Lord was imminent. In the following selection Matthew presents what is commonly known as the *Sermon on the Mount*. Here Jesus instructs his followers about what the *Kingdom of God* requires of all its members. In all likelihood, what Matthew presents is not a verbatim account of a specific sermon that Jesus delivered on some mountainside but a distillation of Jesus' core moral and theological teachings. As you read this excerpt, keep in mind that Jesus lived in the environment that produced Rabbinical Judaism and was, himself, considered a rabbi, or teacher.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Jesus establishes priorities for his followers. What are they?
2. In what ways does Jesus emphasize the spiritual relationship of each believer to God?
3. How does Jesus regard Judaism and especially the Law of Moses? In what ways does he claim that his teachings complete, or perfect, the Law of Moses?
4. What does Matthew mean when he states that Jesus taught with authority and was not like the scribes? Why does Jesus question the authority of the scribes and Pharisees? What is the presumed basis of Jesus' authority?
5. To whom would Jesus' message especially appeal?
6. Compare the message and spirit behind the Sermon on the Mount with that of the Buddha's first sermon "Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Law" (Chapter 3, source 19). Which strike you as more pronounced, their differences or similarities? What do you conclude from your answer?

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you. . . .

"Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till Heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the

scribes and the Pharisees,<sup>1</sup> you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council,<sup>2</sup> and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. . . . You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . . You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in Heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? . . . You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. . . .

"And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:

Our Father who art in Heaven.

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in Heaven.

<sup>1</sup>The *scribes* were nonpriestly professionals who copied, interpreted, and applied the oral traditions that supplemented written biblical Law. The *Pharisees* were members of a Jewish religious party who stressed that all of this nonscriptural, oral law had to be observed as equally and as fully as the written Law of Moses. Eventually this *Oral Torah*, as it was often called, became codified

in the *Talmud*, which was codified in two major editions between about 200 and 600: an earlier and shorter one in Palestine and a later and fuller one in Babylonia. The *Talmud* has served as a major source for Rabbinical Judaism to the present.

<sup>2</sup>The *Sanhedrin*, Judaism's chief religious and judicial body.



Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. . . .

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your

heart be also. . . . Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. . . .

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. . . ."

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

## The West and the First Crusade from a Byzantine Perspective



### ▼ *Anna Comnena, THE ALEXIAD*

The response to Pope Urban II's idealistic appeal was astounding. Between 1096 and 1101 three major waves of crusaders left Europe for the Holy Land; altogether, maybe as many as 130,000 men, women, and children participated, of whom probably only about 10 percent were professional warriors. Urban set in motion a phenomenon that was to engage much of Europe's energy for the next several centuries and would touch all levels of European society. What is more, the crusades would have a profound impact on the immediate and long-range histories of Islam, Byzantium, and, ultimately, the world. Their effects are still being felt today.

The following document, which reflects a twelfth-century Byzantine view of Western Europe and its crusaders, comes from the pen of Anna Comnena (1083–after 1148), daughter of Emperor Alexius I (r. 1081–1118). Anna, who had received an extensive education in classical Greek literature and thought, undertook to write the history of her father's eventful reign following the death of her husband in 1137. The fact that she entitled the work the *Alexiad*, in imitation of Homer's epic poem the *Iliad*, clearly indicates the view she held of her father's place in history. Anna's protestations of historical objectivity notwithstanding, this is partisan history, but its very partisanship allows us to see the world through Byzantine eyes.

In the first selection Anna comments on the Investiture Controversy, a struggle that provided the domestic background to the First Crusade. Although it was much more than just an instance of papal muscle flexing, on one important level Urban's call for the First Crusade was an assertion of papal moral supremacy over Emperor Henry IV (r. 1056–1106), with whom the pope was locked in ideological battle. The second selection deals with the arrival on Byzantine soil in 1096 of the lead elements of the First Crusade.

Anna's history contained more than just a few errors, misconceptions, and polemical diatribes whenever she wrote about the West and Westerners, but those very flaws add to its worth, inasmuch as they reveal how at least one high-born Byzantine viewed the papacy and the West in the first half of the twelfth century.

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## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Anna Comnena think of Pope Gregory VII's actions in the Investiture Controversy?
2. What does she think of the Roman papacy's claims?
3. To her mind, who is the Church's chief priest, and what is the source of his authority?
4. What was Princess Anna's view of the Western crusaders?
5. The age of the crusades witnessed a growing estrangement between the societies of Western Europe and Byzantium. Judging from Anna's account, what do you think contributed to that rift?

## THE INVESTITURE CONTROVERSY

Meanwhile, an event occurred which is worth relating, as it, too, contributed to this man's [Emperor Alexius] reputation and good fortune. . . . Now it happened that the pope of Rome<sup>1</sup> had a difference with Henry, king of Germany.<sup>2</sup> . . . The pope is a very high dignitary, and is protected by troops of various nationalities. The dispute between the king and the pope was this: the latter accused Henry of not bestowing livings<sup>3</sup> as free gifts, but selling them for money,<sup>4</sup> and occasionally entrusting archbishoprics to unworthy recipients,<sup>5</sup> and he also brought further charges of a similar nature against him. The king of Germany on his side indicted the pope of usurpation, as he had seized the apostolic chair without his consent.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, he had the effrontery to utter reckless threats against the pope, saying that if he did not resign his self-elected office, he should be expelled from it. . . . When these words reached the pope's ears, he vented his rage upon Henry's ambassadors;<sup>7</sup> first he tortured them inhumanly, then clipped their hair with

scissors, and sheared their beards with a razor, and finally committed a most indecent outrage upon them, which transcended even the insolence of barbarians, and so sent them away. My womanly and princely dignity forbids my naming the outrage inflicted on them, for it was not only unworthy of a high priest, but of anyone who bears the name of a Christian. I abhor this barbarian's idea, and more still the deed, and I should have defiled both my pen and my paper had I described it explicitly.<sup>8</sup> But as a display of barbaric insolence, and a proof that time in its flow produces men with shameless morals, ripe for any wickedness, this alone will suffice, if I say, that I could not bear to disclose or relate even the tiniest word about what he did. And this was the work of a high priest. Oh, justice! The deed of the supreme high priest! nay, of one who claimed to be the president of the whole world, as indeed the Latins assert and believe, but this, too, is a bit of their boasting. For when the imperial seat was transferred from Rome hither to our native Queen of Cities, and the senate, and the whole administration, there was also

<sup>1</sup>Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073–1085).

<sup>2</sup>Henry IV. As king of Germany, Henry was also emperor-elect of the Western Roman Empire.

<sup>3</sup>A *living*, also known as a *prebend*, was the income a cleric received to support him in his clerical office and duties.

<sup>4</sup>The papacy claimed that lay rulers, such as Henry, were guilty of the sin of *simony* — the selling of sacred clerical offices and other holy items.

<sup>5</sup>According to the papal reformers, this was another abuse

of the system known as *lay investiture*, and some radical reformers, such as Gregory VII, called upon pious lay people to throw out unworthy clerics who had been invested in their offices by lay rulers.

<sup>6</sup>By tradition, the pope-elect applied for imperial approval of his election.

<sup>7</sup>There is no evidence for the abuse that she recounts in the account that follows.

<sup>8</sup>Anna seems to imply that Gregory had the envoys castrated.



transferred the arch-hierarchical primacy.<sup>9</sup> And the emperors from the very beginning have given the supreme right to the episcopacy<sup>10</sup> of Constantinople, and the Council of Chalcedon emphatically raised the bishop of Constantinople to the highest position, and placed all the dioceses of the inhabited world under his jurisdiction.<sup>11</sup> There can be no doubt that the insult done to the ambassadors was aimed at the king who sent them; not only because he scourged them, but also because he was the first to invent this new kind of outrage. For by his actions, the pope suggested, I think, that the power of the king was despicable, and by this horrible outrage on his ambassadors that he, a demi-god, as it were, was treating with a demi-ass! The pope consequently, by wreaking his insolence on the ambassadors, and sending them back to the king in the state I have mentioned, provoked a very great war.

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRANKS

Before he<sup>12</sup> had enjoyed even a short rest, he heard a report of the approach of innumerable Frankish<sup>13</sup> armies. Now he dreaded their arrival for he knew their irresistible manner of attack, their unstable and mobile character and all the peculiar natural and concomitant characteristics which the Frank retains throughout; and he also knew that they were always agape for money, and seemed to disregard their truces readily for any reason that cropped up. For he had always heard this reported of them, and found it very true. However, he did not lose heart, but prepared

himself in every way so that, when the occasion called, he would be ready for battle. And indeed the actual facts were far greater and more terrible than rumor made them. For the whole of the West and all the barbarian tribes which dwell between the further side of the Adriatic and the pillars of Heracles,<sup>14</sup> had all migrated in a body and were marching into Asia through the intervening Europe, and were making the journey with all their household. . . . And they were all so zealous and eager that every highroad was full of them. And those Frankish soldiers were accompanied by an unarmed host more numerous than the sand or the stars, carrying palms and crosses on their shoulders; women and children, too, came away from their countries.<sup>15</sup> And the sight of them was like many rivers streaming from all sides, and they were advancing towards us through Dacia<sup>16</sup> generally with all their hosts. . . .

The incidents of the barbarians' approach followed in the order I have described, and persons of intelligence could feel that they were witnessing a strange occurrence. The arrival of these multitudes did not take place at the same time nor by the same road (for how indeed could such masses starting from different places have crossed the straits of Lombardy all together?). Some first, some next, others after them and thus successively all accomplished the transit, and then marched through the continent. Each army was preceded, as we said, by an unspeakable number of locusts; and all who saw this more than once recognized them as forerunners of the Frankish armies.

<sup>9</sup>Chief *patriarch* of the universal Church (see note 10).

<sup>10</sup>Another term for *bishopric*. A *bishop* was the chief priest of a city or large town and its surrounding lands. An *archbishop* was the bishop of a major city and exercised authority over a number of subordinate, or suffragan, bishops. A *patriarch* was the bishop of such an exceptionally important city that he claimed authority over vast areas and a large number of subordinate archbishops and bishops. The question was, Who was the chief patriarch of the Church — the bishop of Rome or the bishop of Constantinople?

<sup>11</sup>Wrong. The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon of 451

stipulated in canon (regulation) 28 that the bishop of Constantinople enjoyed a primacy of honor second only to that of the bishop of Rome because Constantinople was the *New Rome*.

<sup>12</sup>Emperor Alexius.

<sup>13</sup>*Frank* was a term used in the eastern Mediterranean to refer to any Westerner (see Chapter 9, source 77).

<sup>14</sup>The Strait of Gibraltar.

<sup>15</sup>This, the first wave of the crusade, was the so-called (and misnamed) *Peasants' Crusade* of 1096.

<sup>16</sup>Hungary and Romania.



## The Word of God



### ▼ THE QUR'AN

As long as the Prophet was alive, there was no compelling reason to set his messages down in some definitive form. However, following Muhammad's death in 632, Caliph Abu Bakr ordered one of the Prophet's Companions, Zayd ibn Thabit, to collect from both oral and written sources all of Muhammad's inspired utterances. Subsequently, Caliph Uthman (r. 644–656) promulgated an official collection of these Recitations and ordered all other versions destroyed.

This standard text became the basis of every pious Muslim's education. As Islam spread beyond Arab ethnic boundaries, Muslims all over the world continued to learn Arabic in order to study and recite (usually from memory) the sacred *surahs* (chapters) of this holy book. Because of the Qur'an's centrality to Islam, Arabic literacy became the hallmark of Muslims from sub-Saharan West Africa to South-east Asia.

The following excerpts come from the third of the Qur'an's 114 surahs, *The House of Imran*. Islam reveres the memory of two men named *Imran*: the father of Moses, the prophet to whom Allah gave the Torah, the sacred book and law of the Jews; and the father of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The term *the House of Imran* as used in this surah refers to the families of both prophets.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What evidence is there that Muhammad was experiencing difficulty converting Jewish and Christian Arabs?
2. How does the Qur'an portray Jews and Christians, and what is Islam's relationship with these two faiths?
3. Do you see any parallels between this text and that of the Bible's Jewish and Christian Testaments? What do you infer from your answer?
4. What basic Islamic beliefs are reflected in this excerpt?
5. How does Islam differ from Judaism and Christianity?
6. How are Muslims to deal with nonbelievers? With those who attack them?



God  
there is no god but He, the  
Living, the Everlasting.

He has sent down upon thee the Book  
with the truth, confirming what was before it,  
and He sent down the Torah<sup>1</sup> and the Gospel<sup>2</sup>  
aforetime, as guidance to the people,  
and He sent down the Salvation.

As for those who disbelieve in God's signs, for  
them awaits a terrible chastisement; God is  
All-mighty, Vengeful.

From God nothing whatever is hidden  
in heaven and earth. It is He who forms you  
in the womb as He will. There is no god but  
He,  
the All-mighty, the All-wise.

It is He who sent down upon thee the Book,<sup>3</sup>  
wherein are verses clear that are the Essence  
of the Book. . . .

Our Lord, make not our hearts to swerve  
after that Thou hast guided us; and give us  
mercy from Thee;  
Thou art the Giver.

Our Lord, it is Thou that shall gather  
mankind for a day whereon is no doubt;  
verily God will  
not fail the tryst.<sup>4</sup> . . .

The true religion with God is Islam.  
Those who were given the Book<sup>5</sup> were not at  
variance  
except after the knowledge came to them,  
being insolent one to another.<sup>6</sup> And whoso

disbelieves in God's signs, God is swift  
at the reckoning.  
So if they dispute with thee, say: 'I have  
surrendered my will to God, and whosoever  
follows me.'  
And say to those who have been given the  
Book<sup>7</sup>  
and to the common folk: 'Have you  
surrendered?'  
If they have surrendered, they are right  
guided;  
but if they turn their backs, thine it is only  
to deliver the Message; and God  
sees His servants.<sup>8</sup>

Those who disbelieve in the signs of God  
and slay the Prophets without right,  
and slay such men as bid to justice —  
do thou give them the good tidings of  
a painful chastisement;  
their works have failed in this world and the  
next;  
they have no helpers.

Hast thou not regarded those who were given  
a portion of the Book, being called to the Book  
of God, that it might decide between them,  
and then a party of them turned away,  
swerving aside?

That, because they said, 'The Fire shall not  
touch us, except for a number of days';  
and the lies they forged have deluded them  
in their religion.

But how will it be, when We<sup>9</sup> gather them  
for a day whereon is no doubt, and every soul  
shall be paid in full what it has earned, and  
they  
shall not be wronged?

<sup>1</sup>The Law — the first five books of the *Tanakh* (the Jewish Bible). See Chapter 6, source 46, and Chapter 7, source 49.

<sup>2</sup>Chapter 7, source 48.

<sup>3</sup>All three books of revelation: the Qur'an, the Gospels, and the Torah.

<sup>4</sup>God's covenant with humanity.

<sup>5</sup>Jews and Christians who respectively received from God the Torah and the Gospels.

<sup>6</sup>Through sheer insolence, especially toward one another, Jews and Christians strayed from the path of God's revelation.

<sup>7</sup>Jews and Christians.

<sup>8</sup>God knows who are His submissive servants.

<sup>9</sup>God.

Say: 'O God, Master of the Kingdom,  
Thou givest the Kingdom to whom Thou wilt,  
and seizest the kingdom from whom Thou  
wilt,

Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou  
abasest whom Thou wilt; in Thy hand  
is the good; Thou art powerful  
over everything.

Thou makest the night to enter into the day  
and Thou makest the day to enter into the  
night,

Thou bringest forth the living from the dead  
and Thou bringest forth the dead from the  
living,  
and Thou providest whomsoever Thou wilt  
without reckoning.' . . .

Say: 'If you love God, follow me, and God  
will love you, and forgive you your sins;  
God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.'  
Say: 'Obey God, and the Messenger.'<sup>10</sup> But  
if they turn their backs, God loves not  
the unbelievers.

God chose Adam and Noah  
and the House of Abraham  
and the House of Imran<sup>11</sup>  
above all beings, the  
seed of one another;  
God hears, and knows.

When the wife of Imran<sup>12</sup>  
said, 'Lord, I have vowed  
to Thee, in dedication,  
what is within my womb.  
Receive Thou this from me;  
Thou hearest, and knowest.'  
And when she gave birth to her

she said, 'Lord, I have given  
birth to her, a female.'  
(And God knew very well  
what she had given birth to;  
the male is not as the female.)  
'And I have named her Mary,  
and commend her to Thee  
with her seed, to protect them  
from the accursed Satan.'  
Her Lord received the child  
with gracious favor. . . .

When the angels said,  
'Mary, God gives thee good  
tidings of a Word<sup>13</sup> from Him  
whose name is Messiah,<sup>14</sup>  
Jesus, son of Mary;  
high honored shall he be  
in this world and the next,  
near stationed to God.  
He shall speak to men  
in the cradle, and of age,  
and righteous he shall be.'  
'Lord,' said Mary,  
'how shall I have a son  
seeing no mortal has  
touched me?'<sup>15</sup> Even so,  
God said, 'God  
creates what He will.

When He decrees a thing  
He does but say to it  
"Be," and it is.  
And He will teach him  
the Book, the Wisdom,  
the Torah, the Gospel,  
to be a Messenger  
to the Children of Israel  
saying, "I have come to

<sup>10</sup>Muhammad.

<sup>11</sup>Moses and his brother Aaron (Musa and Harun in Arabic).

<sup>12</sup>This clearly is the second Imran, the father of Mary.

<sup>13</sup>*Logos* in Greek; it is a term used by Christians to describe Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God. Christians believe

that the *Logos* is coeternal and codivine with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>Hebrew for "the Anointed One"; *Christos* in Greek.

<sup>15</sup>She is a virgin. Compare this with the Gospel of Luke, 1: 26-38.

you with a sign from  
your Lord. I will create  
for you out of clay as  
the likeness of a bird;  
then I will breathe into  
it, and it will be a  
bird,<sup>16</sup> by the leave of God.

I will also heal  
the blind and the leper,  
and bring to life the  
dead, by the leave of God.

I will inform you too  
of what things you eat,  
and what you treasure up  
in your houses. Surely  
in that is a sign for you,  
if you are believers.

Likewise confirming the  
truth of the Torah that  
is before me, and to make  
lawful to you certain  
things that before were  
forbidden unto you.

I have come to you with  
a sign from your Lord;  
so fear you God, and  
obey you me. Surely  
God is my Lord and  
your Lord; so serve Him.  
This is a straight path”.’

And when Jesus perceived  
their unbelief, he said,  
‘Who will be my helpers  
unto God?’ The Apostles<sup>17</sup>  
said, ‘We will be helpers  
of God; we believe in God;  
witness thou our submission.

Lord, we believe in that  
Thou hast sent down, and we  
follow the Messenger.  
Inscribe us therefore with  
those who bear witness.’

And they devised, and God  
devised, and God is  
the best of devisers. . . .

This We recite to thee  
of signs and wise remembrance.  
Truly, the likeness of  
Jesus, in God’s sight,  
is as Adam’s<sup>18</sup> likeness;  
He created him of dust,  
then said He unto him,  
‘Be,’ and he was.<sup>19</sup>  
The truth is of God;  
be not of the doubters.  
And whoso disputes with thee  
concerning him, after the  
knowledge that has come to thee,  
say: ‘Come now, let us call  
our sons and your sons,  
our wives and your wives,  
our selves and your selves,  
then let us humbly pray  
and so lay God’s curse  
upon the ones who lie.’  
This is the true story.  
There is no god but God,  
and assuredly God is  
the All-mighty, the All-wise.  
And if they turn their backs,  
assuredly God knows  
the workers of corruption.

<sup>16</sup>An echo of the so-called *Infancy Gospel*, 15:6, ascribed to the Apostle James the Less. This uncanonical, second-century collection of tales relating to Jesus’ miracle-filled boyhood was well-known in the Christian communities of the eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea areas.

<sup>17</sup>Jesus’ twelve closest friends and followers.

<sup>18</sup>The first man.

<sup>19</sup>Jesus was one of God’s creatures — created as Adam had been created; he is not coeternal and codivine with the Father. (See Chapter 7, source 51, note 7, for the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity.)



Say: 'People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him,<sup>20</sup> and do not some of us take others as Lords, apart from God.' And if they turn their backs, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'

People of the Book! Why do you dispute concerning Abraham? The Torah was not sent down, neither the Gospel, but after him.<sup>21</sup>

What,  
have you no reason?

Ha, you are the ones who dispute on what you know; why then dispute you touching a matter of which you know not anything? God knows, and you know not.

No; Abraham in truth was not a Jew, neither a Christian; but he was a Muslim and one pure of faith; certainly he was never of the idolaters.

Surely the people standing closest to Abraham are those who followed him, and this

Prophet,<sup>22</sup>

and those who believe; and God is the Protector  
of the believers.

There is a party of the People of the Book yearn to make you go astray; yet none they make to stray, except themselves, but they are not aware.

People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in God's signs, which you yourselves witness? People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with vanity, and conceal the truth and that wittingly? . . .

Say: 'We believe in God, and that which has been sent

down on us, and sent down on Abraham and Ishmael,<sup>23</sup>

Isaac<sup>24</sup> and Jacob, and the Tribes,<sup>25</sup> and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and the Prophets, of their

Lord; we make no division between any of them, and

to Him we surrender.'

Whoso desires another religion than Islam, it shall

not be accepted of him; in the next world he shall

be among the losers.

<sup>20</sup>God has no divine associates; there is only one God.

<sup>21</sup>The Torah and the Gospels and, therefore, Jews and Christians postdate Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic), the father of all Arabs and Jews.

<sup>22</sup>Muhammad.

<sup>23</sup>Abraham's elder son (Ismail in Arabic), from whom the

Arabs (and, by spiritual extension, all Muslims) claim descent.

<sup>24</sup>Abraham's younger son (Ishaq in Arabic), from whom the Hebrews are descended.

<sup>25</sup>The twelve tribes of Israel.

## Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascent to Heaven



### ▼ *Muhammad ibn Ishaq,* *THE LIFE OF THE MESSENGER OF GOD*

An ambiguous passage in the Qur'an proclaims, "Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the sacred shrine to the distant shrine, whose surroundings We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs" (Surah 17.1). Most Muslims interpret the *sacred shrine* to mean Mecca's *Ka'ba*, a temple sacred to the pre-Islamic polytheists of Arabia and, once Muhammad cleansed it of its 360 idols, a shrine that has remained a focal point of Islamic devotion down to our day because Muslims believe it was constructed by Abraham (Ibrahim) and his son Ishmael (Ismail). Many Muslims further interpret the *distant shrine* to signify Jerusalem's *Temple Mount*, the site of the destroyed Jewish Temple. According to a tradition not specifically recorded in the Qur'an, one night, around the year 620, while asleep within the Ka'ba's stone porch, Muhammad was transported to Jerusalem and from there to Heaven on a mythical beast known as *Buraq*. Actually, the tradition is not and never was that simple. Many variations of the story existed (and exist) side by side, even in the Prophet's own day. Apparently, Muhammad had a mystical vision which he was reluctant or unable to discuss in detail.

Around the mid eighth century, Muhammad ibn Ishaq (ca. 704–ca. 767), the author of the first and most influential biography of the Prophet, faced the problem of trying to reconcile the often contradictory stories that he had collected regarding the Messenger of God's Night Journey. What follows is his attempt to balance and evaluate these variant accounts.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Where does Ibn Ishaq seem to stand on the question of whether Muhammad's Night Journey was a physical one or a purely spiritual one?
2. How do these various accounts use the Night Journey to explain some of Islam's values, practices, and attributes? Be specific.
3. Compare this account of Heaven and Hell with the other visions of the Afterworld that we saw in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Chapter 1, source 1), the *Odyssey* (Chapter 2, source 12), and the *Aeneid* (Chapter 5, source 33). What conclusions follow from this comparative analysis?

Then the apostle was carried by night from the mosque at Mecca to the Masjid al-Aqsa,<sup>1</sup> which is the temple of Aelia.<sup>2</sup> . . .

The following account reached me from 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, and 'A'isha the prophet's wife, and Mu'aiya b. Abu Sufyan, and al-Hasan b. Abu'l-Hasan al-Basri, and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri and Qatada and other traditionists, and Umm Hani' d. of Abu Talib. It is pieced together in the story that follows, each one contributing something of what he was told about what happened when he was taken on the night journey. The matter of the place of the journey and what is said about it is a searching test and a matter of God's power and authority wherein is a lesson for the intelligent; and guidance and mercy and strengthening to those who believe. It was certainly an act of God by which He took him by night in what way He pleased to show him His signs which He willed him to see so that he witnessed His mighty sovereignty and power by which He does what He wills to do.

According to what I have heard 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud used to say: Buraq, the animal whose every stride carried it as far as its eye could reach on which the prophets before him used to ride was brought to the apostle<sup>3</sup> and he was mounted on it. His companion<sup>4</sup> went with him to see the wonders between Heaven and Earth, until he came to Jerusalem's temple. There he found Abraham the friend of God, Moses, and Jesus assembled with a company of prophets, and he prayed with them. Then he was brought three vessels containing milk, wine, and water respectively. The apostle said: 'I heard a voice saying when these were offered to me: If he takes the water he will be drowned and his people also; if he takes the wine he will go astray and his people

also; and if he takes the milk he will be rightly guided and his people also. So I took the vessel containing milk and drank it. Gabriel said to me, You have been rightly guided and so will your people be, Muhammad.'<sup>5</sup>

I was told that al-Hasan said that the apostle said: 'While I was sleeping in the Hijr<sup>6</sup> Gabriel came and stirred me with his foot. I sat up but saw nothing and lay down again. He came a second time and stirred me with his foot. I sat up but saw nothing and lay down again. He came to me the third time and stirred me with his foot. I sat up and he took hold of my arm and I stood beside him and he brought me out to the door of the mosque and there was a white animal, half mule, half donkey, with wings on its sides with which it propelled its feet, putting down each forefoot at the limit of its sight and he mounted me on it. Then he went out with me keeping close to me. . . .

In his story al-Hasan said: 'The apostle and Gabriel went their way until they arrived at the temple at Jerusalem. There he found Abraham, Moses, and Jesus among a company of the prophets. The apostle acted as their imam<sup>7</sup> in prayer. Then he was brought two vessels, one containing wine and the other milk. The apostle took the milk and drank it, leaving the wine. Gabriel said: "You have been rightly guided to the way of nature and so will your people be, Muhammad. Wine is forbidden you." Then the apostle returned to Mecca and in the morning he told Quraysh<sup>8</sup> what had happened. Most of them said, "By God, this is a plain absurdity! A caravan takes a month to go to Syria and a month to return and can Muhammad do the return journey in one night?" Many Muslims gave up their faith; some went to Abu Bakr and said, "What do you think of your friend now, Abu Bakr? He alleges

<sup>1</sup>The Farther Shrine. The Mosque of al-Aqsa, which stands on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, is believed by many Muslims to be the location from which Muhammad physically rose to Heaven.

<sup>2</sup>The Roman name for Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>Muhammad.

<sup>4</sup>The angel Gabriel.

<sup>5</sup>Many Islamic commentators interpret this as meaning that

Muhammad rejected the extremes of asceticism (water) and hedonism (wine).

<sup>6</sup>The Ka'ba's stone porch.

<sup>7</sup>Prayer leader.

<sup>8</sup>The dominant tribe of Mecca, which controlled the city's commerce. Although Muhammad was of that tribe, most of its members rejected his prophecies at this time.



that he went to Jerusalem last night and prayed there and came back to Mecca." He replied that they were lying about the apostle; but they said that he was in the mosque at that very moment telling the people about it. Abu Bakr said, "If he says so then it is true. And what is so surprising in that? He tells me that communications from God from Heaven to Earth come to him in an hour of a day or night and I believe him, and that is more extraordinary than that at which you boggle!" He then went to the apostle and asked him if these reports were true, and when he said they were, he asked him to describe Jerusalem to him.<sup>9</sup> Al-Hasan said that he was lifted up so that he could see the apostle speaking as he told Abu Bakr what Jerusalem was like.<sup>9</sup> Whenever he described a part of it he said, 'That's true. I testify that you are the apostle of God' until he had completed the description, and then the apostle said, 'And you, Abu Bakr, are the *Siddiq*.'<sup>10</sup> This was the occasion on which he got this honorific. . . .

One of Abu Bakr's family told me that 'A'isha the prophet's wife used to say: 'The apostle's body remained where it was but God removed his spirit by night.'

Ya'qub b. 'Utba b. al-Mughira b. al-Akhnas told me that Mu'awiya b. Abu Sufyan when he was asked about the apostle's night journey said, 'It was a true vision from God.' What these two latter said does not contradict what al-Hasan said, seeing that God Himself said, 'We made the vision which we showed thee only for a test to men;' nor does it contradict what God said in the story of Abraham when he said to his son, 'O my son, verily I saw in a dream that I must sacrifice thee,'<sup>11</sup> and he acted accordingly. Thus, as I see it, revelation from God comes to the prophets waking or sleeping.

I have heard that the apostle used to say, 'My eyes sleep while my heart is awake.' Only God knows how revelation came and he saw what he

saw. But whether he was asleep or awake, it was all true and actually happened. . . .

One whom I have no reason to doubt told me on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri: I heard the apostle say, 'After the completion of my business in Jerusalem a ladder was brought to me finer than any I have ever seen. It was that to which the dying man looks when death approaches. My companion mounted it with me until we came to one of the gates of Heaven called the Gate of the Watchers. An angel called Isma'il was in charge of it, and under his command were twelve thousand angels each of them having twelve thousand angels under his command.' As he told this story the apostle used to say, 'and none knows the armies of God but He.' When Gabriel brought me in, Isma'il asked who I was, and when he was told that I was Muhammad he asked if I had been given a mission, and on being assured of this he wished me well. . . .

In his tradition Abu Sa'id al-Khudri said that the apostle said: 'When I entered the lowest heaven I saw a man sitting there with the spirits of men passing before him. To one he would speak well and rejoice in him saying: "A good spirit from a good body" and of another he would say "Faugh!" and frown, saying: "An evil spirit from an evil body." In answer to my question Gabriel told me that this was our father Adam reviewing the spirits of his offspring; the spirit of a believer excited his pleasure, and the spirit of an infidel excited his disgust so that he said the words just quoted.

'Then I saw men with lips like camels; in their hands were pieces of fire like stones which they used to thrust into their mouths and they would come out of their posteriors. I was told that these were those who sinfully devoured the wealth of orphans. . . .

'Then I saw men with good fat meat before them side by side with lean stinking meat, eat-

<sup>9</sup>Al-Hasan was a child at the time in which he witnessed this.

<sup>10</sup>Testifier to the Truth.

<sup>11</sup>Surah, 37:10.

ing of the latter and leaving the former. These are those who forsake the women which God has permitted and go after those he has forbidden.

"Then I saw women hanging by their breasts. These were those who had fathered bastards on their husbands." . . .

To continue the tradition of Sa'id al-Khudri: "Then I was taken up to the second heaven and there were the two maternal cousins Jesus, Son of Mary, and John, son of Zakariah.<sup>12</sup> Then to the third heaven and there was a man whose face was as the moon at the full. This was my brother Joseph, son of Jacob. Then to the fourth heaven and there was a man called Idris.<sup>13</sup> And we have exalted him to a lofty place." Then to the fifth heaven and there was a man with white hair and a long beard, never have I seen a more handsome man than he. This was the beloved among his people Aaron son of 'Imran.<sup>14</sup> Then to the sixth heaven, and there was a dark man with a hooked nose. . . . This was my brother Moses, son of 'Imran. Then to the seventh heaven and there was a man sitting on a throne at the gate of the immortal mansion. Every day seventy thousand angels went in not to come back until the resurrection day. Never have I seen a man more like myself. This was my father Abraham.<sup>15</sup> Then he took me into Paradise and there I saw a damsel with dark red lips and I asked her to whom she

belonged, for she pleased me much when I saw her, and she told me "Zayd b. Haritha." The apostle gave Zayd the good news about her."<sup>16</sup>

From a tradition of 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud from the prophet there has reached me the following: When Gabriel took him up to each of the heavens and asked permission to enter he had to say whom he had brought and whether he had received a mission and they would say 'God grant him life, brother and friend!' until they reached the seventh heaven and his Lord. There the duty of fifty prayers a day was laid upon him.

The apostle said: 'On my return I passed by Moses and what a fine friend of yours he was! He asked me how many prayers had been laid upon me and when I told him fifty he said, "Prayer is a weighty matter and your people are weak, so go back to your Lord and ask him to reduce the number for you and your community." I did so and He took off ten. Again I passed by Moses and he said the same again; and so it went on until only five prayers for the whole day and night were left. Moses again gave me the same advice. I replied that I had been back to my Lord and asked him to reduce the number until I was ashamed, and I would not do it again. He of you who performs them in faith and trust will have the reward of fifty prayers.'<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Known to Christians as John the Baptist.

<sup>13</sup>Known to Jews and Christians as Enoch, the father of Methuselah.

<sup>14</sup>See source 56, note 11.

<sup>15</sup>See source 56, notes 21, 23, and 24.

<sup>16</sup>Zayd was a former slave whom Muhammad freed and then

received into his house as a foster son. Muhammad arranged the marriage between Zayd and the beautiful Zaynab bint Jahsh. Later, when Zayd divorced Zaynab, Muhammad married her.

<sup>17</sup>See source 57, note 1.

## Troubles in Late Tang



### ▼ *Du Fu, POEMS*

The Chinese consider the eighth century their golden age of classical poetry. Among the century's many great poets, three are universally recognized as China's preeminent poetic geniuses: the Buddhist Wang Wei (699–759), the Daoist Li Bo (701–762), and the Confucian Du Fu (712–770). Despite their differences in personality and perspective, they knew, deeply respected, and genuinely liked one another. Of the three, the Chinese most esteem Du Fu, primarily for the tone of compassion for the downtrodden that pervades his poetry.

Du Fu himself knew adversity. Despite his extraordinary erudition, he was denied a position of public responsibility and spent much of his adult life as an impoverished wanderer and farmer. He lived to see one of his children die of starvation and suffered through the destruction of General An Lushan's rebellion (755–763), a civil war from which the Tang regime never recovered. Despite these adversities, Du Fu never lost his love for humanity or his belief in the innate goodness of the common person.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Du Fu, what costs have the Chinese paid for their empire? Has it been worth it? What does he think of military glory?
2. From a Confucian perspective, what is wrong with eighth-century China?
3. Can you find any Daoist sentiments in these poems?



4. What do the second and third poems tell us about the economic and social consequences of An Lushan's rebellion?
5. In what ways do the first two poems seem to suggest that Du Fu believed that the Tang emperor might be losing the *Mandate of Heaven* (Chapter 1, source 5)?
6. One of the prime virtues of Confucianism is *ren*, which is best translated as "humaneness." The character for this word is composed of two elements: the signs for *person* and *two*. In what ways do these poems, especially the third poem, exemplify the qualities of *ren*?

## BALLAD OF THE WAR CHARIOTS

The jingle of war chariots,  
Horses neighing, men marching,  
Bows and arrows slung over hips;  
Beside them stumbling, running  
The mass of parents, wives and children  
Clogging up the road, their rising dust  
Obscuring the great bridge at Hsienyang;  
Stamping their feet, weeping  
In utter desperation with cries  
That seem to reach the clouds;

Ask a soldier: Why do you go?  
Would simply bring the answer:  
Today men are conscripted often;  
Fifteen-year-olds sent up the Yellow River  
To fight; men of forty marched away  
To colonize the western frontier;  
Village elders take young boys,  
Do up their hair like adults  
To get them off; if they return  
It will be white with age, but even then  
They may be sent off to the frontier again;

Frontiers on which enough blood has flowed  
To make a sea, yet our Emperor still would  
Expand his authority! Have you not heard  
How east of Huashan<sup>1</sup> many counties  
Are desolate with weeds and thorns?  
The strongest women till the fields,  
Yet crops come not as well as before;

Lads from around here are well known  
For their bravery, but hate to be driven  
Like dogs or chickens; only because  
You kindly ask me do I dare give vent  
To grievances; now for instance  
With the men from the western frontier  
Still not returned, the government  
Demands immediate payment of taxes,  
But how can we pay when so little  
Has been produced?

\* Now, we peasants have learnt one thing:  
To have a son is not so good as having  
A daughter who can marry a neighbor  
And still be near us, while a son  
Will be taken away to die in some  
Wild place, his bones joining those  
That lie bleached white on the shores  
Of Lake Kokonor,<sup>2</sup> where voices of new spirits  
Join with the old, heard sadly through  
The murmur of falling rain.

## THINKING OF OTHER DAYS

In those prosperous times  
Of the period of Kai Yuan,<sup>3</sup>  
Even a small county city  
Would be crowded with the rich;  
Rice flowed like oil and both  
Public and private granaries  
Were stuffed with grain; all

<sup>1</sup>The land back home, east of the western frontier.

<sup>2</sup>A lake west of the Great Wall.

<sup>3</sup>A title of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756). Also known as *Minghuang*, or Brilliant Monarch, he was the last effec-

tive Tang emperor and a great patron of the arts. The rebellion of General An Lushan broke out during the last years of his forty-four-year reign.

Through the nine provinces  
 There were no robbers on  
 The roads; traveling from home  
 Needless to pick an auspicious  
 Day to start; everywhere carriages  
 With folk wearing silk or brocade;  
 Farmers ploughed, women picked  
 Mulberries, nothing that did  
Not run smoothly; in court  
 Was a good Emperor for whom  
 The finest music was played;  
 Friends were honest with each other  
 And for long there had been  
 No kind of disaster; great days with  
 Rites and songs, the best of other times,  
 Laws the most just; who could  
 Have dreamed that later a bolt  
 Of silk would cost ten thousand  
 Cash? Now the fields farmers  
Tilled have become covered  
 With bloodshed; palaces at Luoyang<sup>4</sup>  
 Are burnt, and temples to  
 The imperial ancestors are full  
 Of foxes and rabbit burrows!  
 Now I am too sad to ask  
 Questions of the old people,  
 Fearing to hear tales  
 Of horror and strife;  
 I am not able, but yet

<sup>4</sup>The auxiliary capital and one of China's most sacred and ancient cities.

<sup>5</sup>Xuanzong's son and successor.

The Emperor<sup>5</sup> has given me  
 A post, I hoping that he  
 Can make the country  
 Rise again like King Xuan  
 Of Zhou,<sup>6</sup> though for myself  
 I simply grieve that now age  
 And sickness take their toll.

### ON ASKING MR. WU FOR THE SECOND TIME

Do please let your neighbor  
 Who lives to the west of you  
 Pick up the dates in front of  
 Your home; for she is a woman  
 Without food or children; only  
 Her condition brings her to  
 This necessity; surely she  
 Ought not to fear you, because  
 You are not a local man, yet  
 It would be good of you to try  
 And help her, and save her  
 Feelings; so do not fence off  
 Your fruit; heavy taxation is  
 The cause of her misery; the  
 Effect of war on the helpless  
 Brings us unending sorrow.

ADDRESSING  
 MR. WU (A NEIGHBOR)  
 NOT A LOCAL MAN  
 - SIGNIFICANT B/C...  
 PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY WORK / LIVE  
 THERE HAVE NO FOOD  
 BUT PEOPLE (THE RICH) WHO  
 OWN LAND THERE DON'T EVEN  
 LIVE THERE AND ARE WELL  
 OFF ANYWAY.

<sup>6</sup>The last effective king of the Western Zhou Dynasty, he spent most of his reign (827-781 B.C.E.) fighting defensive wars against non-Chinese to the north.

## The Ideal Samurai



### ▼ *CHRONICLE OF THE GRAND PACIFICATION*

While imperial courtiers at Kyoto composed exquisite poems that extolled the beauty of nature, Japan's warlords were engaged in carving out independent principalities backed by the might of their private armies of *samurai* (those who serve). Between 1180 and 1185 a conflict known as the *Gempei War* devastated the heartland of the main island of Honshu as the mighty Taira and Minamoto clans fought for control of the imperial family and its court. In 1185 the Minamoto house



destroyed the Taira faction, thereby becoming the supreme military power in Japan.

Rather than seizing the imperial office for himself, the leader of the victorious Minamoto family accepted the title of *shogun*, or imperial commander in chief, and elected to rule over a number of military governors from his remote base at *Kamakura*, while a puppet emperor reigned at Kyoto. This feudal system, known as the *bakufu* (tent headquarters), shaped the politics and culture of Japan for centuries to come.

Toward the early fourteenth century the *Kamakura Shogunate* began to show signs of weakening, which in turn encouraged Emperor Go-Daigo (r. 1318–1336) to lead a coup in an attempt to destroy the shogunate and re-establish the primacy of the emperor. This rebel emperor became the nucleus of a full-scale feudal uprising by a wide number of dissatisfied warlords, samurai, and warrior-monks. The warrior-monks were members of great landholding Buddhist monasteries, which already for many centuries had been centers of independent political, economic, and military power. The rebellion resulted in the destruction of Kamakura and the death of its last shogun.

Go-Daigo's victory was brief, however. Within a few years he was deposed by another warlord, who installed his own emperor and received back from him the title of shogun, thereby establishing the *Ashikaga Shogunate* (1338–1573). Japanese government and society, therefore, continued to be dominated by its feudal warriors.

The story of the last several years of the Kamakura Shogunate is recorded in the pages of the *Taiheiki*, or *Chronicle of the Grand Pacification*. Composed by a number of largely anonymous Buddhist monks between about 1333 and maybe as late as 1370, this chronicle recounts the battles and intrigues of the period 1318–1333. Its title refers to Go-Daigo's momentarily successful attempt to destroy, or "pacify," the shogunate.

Our excerpt tells the story of the defense in 1331 of Akasaka castle by *Kusunoki Masashige*, one of the emperor's most fervent supporters. This was a dark moment for the imperial forces. The emperor, along with many followers, had recently been captured at Kasagi, a fortified monastic temple. The imperial cause needed a victory, even a moral one, and this heretofore obscure warrior was about to provide new hope with his inspired defense of this stronghold.

Killed in 1333 in a battle he knew he could not win, Masashige has been revered through the centuries as a paragon of samurai virtues. The *kamikaze* (divine wind) suicide pilots whom Japan launched against the U.S. Navy in 1945 were called "chrysanthemum warriors" in reference to the Kusunoki family's flowered crest.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why do the warriors assaulting Akasaka hope that Kusunoki will be able to hold out for at least one day? What does your answer suggest?
2. Bravery is naturally expected of all warriors, but which other samurai virtues does Kusunoki Masashige exemplify?

3. Which samurai virtues do his foes exhibit? In what ways did they show themselves to be less than ideal warriors?
4. Thinking their enemy dead, the shogun's warriors pause to remember Kusunoki Masashige. What does this suggest?
5. Based on this account, what picture emerges of the ideals and realities of fourteenth-century Japanese feudal warfare?

No man of the mighty host from the distant eastern lands was willing to enter the capital, so sorely were their spirits mortified because Kasagi castle had fallen.<sup>1</sup> . . . All took their way instead toward Akasaka castle, where Kusunoki Hyoe Masashige was shut up. . . .

When these had passed beyond the Ishi River, they beheld the castle. Surely this was a stronghold of hasty devising! The ditch was not a proper ditch, and there was but a single wooden wall, plastered over with mud. Likewise in size the castle was not more than one hundred or two hundred yards around, with but twenty or thirty towers within, made ready in haste. Of those who saw it, not one but thought:

"Ah, what a pitiable spectacle the enemy presents! Even if we were to hold this castle in one hand and throw, we would be able to throw it! Let us hope that in some strange manner Kusunoki will endure for at least a day, that by taking booty and winning honor we may obtain future rewards."

Drawing near, the three hundred thousand riders<sup>2</sup> got down from their horses, one after another, jumped into the ditch, stood below the towers, and competed to be the first to enter the castle.

Now by nature Masashige was a man who would "scheme in his tent to defeat an enemy a thousand leagues distant," one whose counsels were as subtle as though sprung from the brain of Chenping or Zhang Liang.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore had he kept two hundred mighty archers within the

castle, and had given three hundred riders to his brother Shichiro and Wada Goro Masato outside in the mountains. Yet the attackers, all unwitting, rushed forward together to the banks of the ditch on the four sides, resolved to bring down the castle in a single assault.

Then from tower tops and windows the archers shot furiously with arrowheads aligned together, smiting more than a thousand men in an instant. And greatly amazed, the eastern warriors said:

"No, no! From the look of things at this castle, it will never fall in a day or two. Let us take time before going against it, that we may establish camps and battle-offices and form separate parties."

They drew back from the attack a little, took off their horses' saddles, cast aside their armor, and rested in their camps.

In the mountains Kusunoki Shichiro and Wada Goro said, "The time is right." They made two parties of the three hundred horsemen, came out from the shelter of the trees on the eastern and western slopes with two fluttering banners, whereon were depicted the chrysanthemum and water crest of the Kusunoki house, and advanced quietly toward the enemy, urging their horses forward in the swirling mist.

The attackers hesitated doubtfully.

"Are they enemies or friends?" they thought.

Then suddenly from both sides the three hundred attacked, shouting, in wedge-shaped formations. They smote the center of the three hundred thousand horsemen spread out like

<sup>1</sup>This force of Kamakura supporters from the east was dispirited because it had arrived too late to participate in the capture of Kasagi.

<sup>2</sup>The *Taiheiki* grossly exaggerates the number of pro-Kamakura fighters.

<sup>3</sup>Two ministers of the first Han emperor of China. The quotation is from Ban Gu and Ban Zhao's *History of the Former Han Dynasty*.

clouds or mist, broke into them in all directions, and cut them down on every side. And the attackers' hosts were powerless to form to give battle, so great was their bewilderment.

Next within the castle three gates opened all together, wherefrom two hundred horsemen galloped forth side by side to let fly a multitude of arrows from bows pulled back to the utmost limits. Although the attackers were a mighty host, they were confounded utterly by these few enemies, so that they clamored aloud. Some mounted tethered horses and beat them with their stirrups, seeking to advance; others fixed arrows to unstrung bows and tried vainly to shoot. Two or three men took up a single piece of armor and disputed it, pulling against each other. Though a lord was killed, his vassals knew nothing of it; though a father was killed, his sons aided him not, but like scattered spiders they retreated to the Ishi River. For half a league along their way there was no space where a foot might tread, by reason of their abandoned horses and arms. To be sure, great gains came suddenly to the common folk of Tojo district!<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the proud eastern warriors thought in their hearts that Kusunoki's strategy could not be despised, since blundering unexpectedly they had been defeated in the first battle. For though they went forth against Handa and Narahara,<sup>5</sup> they did not seek to attack the castle again quickly, but consulted together and made a resolution, saying:

"Let us remain awhile in this place, that led by men acquainted with the home provinces we may cut down trees on the mountains, burn houses, and guard thereby against warriors waiting in reserve to fall upon us. Then may we attack the castle with tranquil spirits."

But there were many . . . who had lost fathers and sons in the fighting. These roused themselves up, saying:

"What is the use of living? Though we go alone, let us gallop forth to die in battle!"

And thereupon all the others took heart as well, and galloped forward eagerly.

Now Akasaka castle might not be attacked easily on the east, where terraced rice fields extended far up the mountainside. But on three sides the land was flat; likewise there was but a single ditch and wall. All the attackers were contemptuous, thinking, "No matter what demons may be inside, it cannot be much of an affair." When they drew near again, they went forward quickly into the ditch to the opposite bank, pulled away the obstacles and made ready to enter. Yet within the castle there was no sound.

Then the attackers thought in their hearts:

"As it was yesterday, so will it be today. After wounding many men with arrows to confuse us, they will send other warriors to fight in our midst."

They counted out a hundred thousand riders to go to the mountains in the rear, while the remaining two hundred thousand compassed the castle round about like thickly growing rice, hemp, bamboo, or reeds. Yet from within the castle not an arrow was released, nor was any man seen.

At last the attackers laid hold of the wall on the four sides to climb over it, filled with excitement. But thereupon men within the castle cut the ropes supporting that wall, all at the same time, for it was a double wall, built to let the outside fall down. More than a thousand of the attackers became as though crushed by a weight, so that only their eyes moved as the defenders threw down logs and boulders onto them. And in this day's fighting more than seven hundred of them were slain.

Unwilling to attack again because of the bitterness of the first two days of fighting, for four or five days the eastern hosts merely besieged the castle from camps hard by. Truly were they without pride, to watch thus idly from a nearby place! How mortifying it was that men of the future would make a mock of them, saying,

<sup>4</sup>Commoners scavenged battlefields.

<sup>5</sup>Settlements near Akasaka.



"Although the enemy were no more than four or five hundred persons shut up in a flatland castle not five hundred yards around, the hosts of the eight eastern provinces would not attack them, but shamefully laid down a siege from a distance!"

At last the attackers spoke among themselves, saying:

"Previously we attacked in the fierceness of our valor, not carrying shields or preparing weapons of assault, wherefore we suffered unforeseen injury. Let us go against them now with a different method."

All commanded the making of shields with toughened hide on their faces, such as might not be smashed through easily, and with these upheld they went against the castle once more, saying:

"There can be no difficulty about jumping across to the wall, since the banks are not high, nor is the ditch deep. Yet will not this wall also drop down upon us?"

They spoke with fearful hearts, reluctant to seize upon the wall lightly. All went down into the water of the ditch, laid hold upon the wall with grapnels, and pulled at it. But when the wall was about to fall, those within the castle took ladles with handles ten or twenty feet long, dipped up boiling water, and poured it onto them. The hot water passed through the holes in their helmet tops, ran down from the edges of their shoulder-guards, and burned their bodies so grievously that they fled panic-stricken, throwing down their shields and grapnels. How shameful it was! Although no man of them was slain, there were as many as two or three hundred persons who could not stand up from the burns on their hands and feet, or who lay down with sick bodies.

So it was that whenever the attackers advanced with new devisings, those within the castle defended against them with changed stratagems. Wherefore in consultation together the attackers said, "From this time on, let us starve them,

for we can do no other." They forbore utterly to do battle, but only built towers in their camps, lined up obstacles, and laid down a siege.

Soon the warriors in the castle grew weary of spirit, since there was no diversion for them. Nor was their food sufficient, since Kusunoki had built the castle in haste. The battle having begun and the siege commenced, within twenty days the stores were eaten up; nor did food remain for more than four or five days.

Then Masashige spoke a word to his men, saying:

"In various battles of late have we overreached the foe, whose slain are beyond counting, but these things are as nothing in the eyes of so mighty a host. Moreover, the castle's food is eaten up, and no other warriors will come to deliver us.

"Assuredly I will not cherish life in the hour of need, from the beginning having been steadfast for His Majesty's sake. . . . But the true man of courage 'is cautious in the face of difficulties, and deliberates before acting.'<sup>6</sup> I will flee this castle for a time, causing the enemy to believe that I have taken my life, so that they may go away rejoicing. When they are gone I will come forward to fight; and if they return I will go deep into the mountains. When I have harassed the eastern hosts four or five times in this manner, will they not grow weary? This is a plan for destroying the enemy in safety. What are your views?"

All agreed, "It ought to be so."

Then quickly within the castle they dug a mighty hole seven feet deep, filling it with twenty or thirty bodies of the slain (who were fallen down dead into the ditch in great numbers), whereon they piled up charcoal and firewood. And they awaited a night of pouring rain and driving wind.

Perhaps because Masashige had found favor in the sight of heaven, suddenly a harsh wind came raising the sand, accompanied by a rain violent enough to pierce bamboo. The night was exceed-

<sup>6</sup>A quotation from Confucius' *Analects*.

ingly dark, and all the enemy in their camps were sheltered behind curtains. This indeed was the awaited night!

Leaving a man in the castle to light a blaze when they were fled away safely five or six hundred yards, the defenders cast off their armor, assumed the guise of attackers, and fled away calmly by threes and fives, passing in front of the enemy battle-offices and beside enemy sleeping places.

It came about that the eyes of an enemy fell upon Masashige, where he passed before the stables of Nagasaki. The man challenged him, saying, "What person passes before this battle-office in stealth, not announcing himself?"

In haste Masashige passed beyond that place, calling back, "I am a follower of the grand marshal who has taken the wrong road."

"A suspicious fellow indeed!" thought the man. "Assuredly he is a stealer of horses! I shall shoot him down."

He ran up close and shot Masashige full in the body. But although the arrow looked to have driven deep at the height of the elbow-joint, it turned over and flew back again without touching the naked flesh.

Later, when that arrow's track was observed, men saw that it had struck an amulet wherein was preserved the *Kannon Sutra*,<sup>7</sup> which Masashige had trusted and read for many years. Its arrowhead had stopped in the two-line poem, "Wholeheartedly praising the name." How strange it was!

When in this manner Masashige had escaped death from a certain-death arrowhead, he fled to a safe place more than half a league distant. And looking back he saw that the warrior had lighted fires in the castle's battle-offices, faithful to his covenant.

The hosts of the attackers were seized with amazement at the sight of the flames.

"Aha! The castle has fallen!" they shouted exultantly. "Let no man be spared! Let none escape!"

When the flames died away, they saw a mighty hole inside the castle, piled up with charcoal, wherein lay the burned bodies of many men. And then not a man of them but spoke words of praise, saying:

"How pitiful! Masashige had ended his life! Though he was an enemy, his was a glorious death, well befitting a warrior."

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<sup>7</sup>A sutra, or Buddhist holy book, dedicated to the female Bodhisattva *Kannon*, the Japanese counterpart of Guanyin (see Chapter 6, sources 44 and 45).

# The God Who Descended from the Mountains



## ▼ A MOCHE CERAMIC

To most educated people pre-Columbian civilization in Peru is synonymous with the Inca culture of the Andean highlands. Actually, the Incas, whom the Spanish conquistadors met and conquered in the course of the sixteenth century C.E., were newcomers and only the most recent participants in what was already some two and one-half thousand years of Peruvian civilization. More than a thousand years before the rise of the Inca Empire, a people we call the *Moche*, or *Mochica*, constructed a highly developed civilization along the coastal desert plain of northern Peru. This region is one of the driest places on Earth, receiving an average of far less than an inch of annual rainfall. It is fed, however, by a number of rivers that rise in the towering Andes to the east and flow down to the Pacific Ocean. One of those rivers is the Rio Moche. The fertility of the Moche Valley allowed its inhabitants to carve out a powerful state and a distinctive civilization that was at the height of its creativity in the period 200–750.

Moche artisans perfected the craft of casting and alloying a variety of soft metals, allowing them to create some of the finest gold, silver, and copper artifacts ever produced in antiquity. The most distinctive and brilliant artistic products of this culture, however, were made from a humbler material — clay. The Moche people produced vast numbers of finely crafted ceramics — particularly effigy vessels that represented a wide variety of deities, humans, animals, plants, and structures — and large numbers of them have survived. More than 90 percent of all Moche art and craftwork uncovered by modern archeologists consists of these magnificent ceramics — all created without benefit of the potter's wheel.

No effigy pot, by itself, tells the historian much about Moche culture, but cumulatively they tell a compelling story of the daily lives, beliefs, and rituals of the people who created these earthenware masterpieces. Although a single example of Moche art might more easily confuse than illuminate, the artifact that appears here is an exception and provides some interesting insights into the Moche vision of the world.

This vessel — a water jug to be used possibly for only ceremonial purposes — is molded into a stylized mountain from which several deities emerge. In the center is a Moche god, who wears a sunrise headdress from which a snake's head projects, and he is flanked by two snakes. To his right (the viewer's left) is a were-jaguar, an individual possessing both jaguar and human characteristics (see Chapter 1, source 10). This individual, who seems to be a god (or a shaman who has taken on divine attributes), wears a living snake belt that curls beneath him so that he stands on the serpent's head.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Note the cave from which the god in the center of the water jug emerges. What is his apparent relationship with the mountain?



0  
PKD  
bachelors  
masters  
associates





*Moche Effigy Pot*

2. Consider this same god's headdress. What is the message? (Keep in mind the geographic relationship of the mountains to the Moche Valley.)
3. Does the geographic situation of the Moche Valley provide any clue as to what the four snakes that flow from the mountain represent?
4. Based on your answers to questions 1–3, what do you conclude this god's main functions were?

5. What about the feline qualities of the god/shaman on the far left (as you view the pot)? What does he seem to represent? In answering this question, you might want to refer back to Chapter 1, source 10.
6. Consider the title of this source. Which of the two deities was the “god who descended from the mountains”? Why do you reach this conclusion?
7. Which of these two gods seems more remote and lofty? Why? Which seems more active and closer to humanity? Why? Which of these is the creator-god? What are the apparent functions of the other god? Which deity was probably more loved and prayed to? Why?





## Quiché Mayan Gods and Monarchs



### ▼ *THE BOOK OF THE COMMUNITY*

Among all the peoples of ancient America, only the Meso-Americans created systems of writing, although the Quechua-speaking people of the Andes, who carved out the Inca Empire, devised a system of record keeping by means of knotted strings that served almost as well (source 100). Of all the forms of writing used in Central America, the *Maya* had the most sophisticated, an exceedingly complex system based on a wide range of picture-symbols, technically known as *glyphs*, that variously represented objects, concepts, and sounds. Unfortunately, Spanish missionaries, zealous to destroy all remnants of indigenous paganism, burned most of the books of the *Maya*. Only three preconquest Mayan books, and fragments of a fourth, survived the fires of the Spanish Catholic Inquisition. Nevertheless, three factors allow us to know more about the preconquest *Maya* than any other Amerindian civilization: (1) recently scholars broke the code of the *Mayas'* ancient written language, enabling historians to read most of their texts and engraved monuments; (2) the classical *Maya* left behind a rich archeological heritage, which is still being explored and interpreted; and (3) the *Maya*, as a people and culture, survive and even flourish today in Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, preserving much of their past in their living traditions.

The document that appears here dates from shortly after the early sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of the *Quiché* *Maya* of Guatemala, the most powerful of the then-existing Mayan states of Central America. The *Maya*, who had a shared culture but were never organized under a single central authority, had reached their classical heights between about 300 and 800, but by 900 had abandoned many of their cities and ceremonial centers. Yet even with the collapse of many of their states and urban centers, the *Maya* persisted as a culture and even built a few new cities. When the army of Pedro de Alvarado invaded the territory of the *Quiché* in 1524, it found a vigorous society that initially offered spirited resistance. Eventually, however, the Spaniards prevailed.

Faced with the threat of losing all memory of the *Mayan* way of life, an anonymous *Quiché* Indian, who was at least nominally a convert to Catholic Christianity, undertook to compile, in his native tongue, a collection of *Mayan* beliefs, traditions, and history down to 1550, because, as he noted: "The original book, written long ago, existed, but its sight is hidden to the searcher." The result was the *Popol Vuh*, or *Book of the Community*. The *Popol Vuh* remained hidden for about 150 years until it was discovered by a sympathetic Spanish priest, who was also a scholar of the *Quiché* culture. He transcribed the text from its manuscript, thereby preserving the original *Quiché* version, and translated it into Spanish, in order "to bring to light what had been among the Indians in the olden days [and] . . . to give information on the errors which they had in their paganism and which they still adhere to among themselves."

The following selection tells about *Tohil*, chief god of the Quiché Maya, and his relationship with the *Ahpop*, or Quiché monarch, in the era preceding the coming of the Spaniards.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What special functions did the ancient Quiché monarchs have? Why did the monarchs fast?
2. What were the mutual responsibilities of monarch and subjects? What do they suggest about this society?
3. How was the Quiché state ruled? What does its having three royal houses suggest?
4. What did the people owe Tohil? What was expected in return?
5. How do we know that Tohil was a syncretic deity, whose manifestations and functions were drawn from a variety of sources? What does this suggest about the make-up of the Quiché state?
6. What evidence is there that the Quiché saw themselves as belonging to a single culture, despite their tribal divisions?
7. What allows us to infer that postclassical Quiché civilization was still vibrant?

We shall now tell of the House of the God. The house was also given the same name as the god. The Great Edifice of Tohil was the name of the Temple of Tohil, of those of Cavec.<sup>1</sup> . . .

Tzutuhá, which is seen in Cahbahá,<sup>2</sup> is the name of a large edifice in which there was a stone which all the lords of Quiché worshiped and which was also worshiped by all the tribes.

The people first offered their sacrifices before Tohil, and afterward went to pay their respects to the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camhá.<sup>3</sup> Then they went to present their gorgeous feathers and their tribute before the king. And the kings whom they maintained were the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camhá, who had conquered their towns.

Great lords and wonderful men were the marvelous kings Gucumatz and Cotuhá, the mar-

velous kings Quicab and Cavizimah.<sup>4</sup> They knew if there would be war, and everything was clear before their eyes; they saw if there would be death and hunger, if there would be strife. They well know that there was a place where it could be seen, that there was a book which they called the *Popol Vuh*.

But not only in this way was the estate of the lords great, great also were their fasts. And this was in recognition of their having been created, and in recognition of their having been given their kingdoms. They fasted a long time and made sacrifices to their gods. Here is how they fasted: Nine men fasted and another nine made sacrifices<sup>5</sup> and burned incense. Thirteen more men fasted, and another thirteen more made offerings and burned incense before Tohil. And

<sup>1</sup>The principal branch of the Quiché people.

<sup>2</sup>The name of the ceremonial center where the temple called *Tzutuhá* was located.

<sup>3</sup>The Ahpop-Camhá was a coreigning subking. Both the Ahpop and Ahpop-Camhá came from the chief royal family of the Quiché people, the *Cavec*.

<sup>4</sup>Gucumatz and Cotuhá were Ahpop and Ahpop-Camhá

during the fifth generation of the twelve generations of Cavec monarchs who ruled the Quiché prior to the Spanish conquest. They were the first of a line of sorcerer-kings. Quicab and Cavizimah were seventh-generation Cavec monarchs.

<sup>5</sup>Possibly human sacrifices.

while before their god, they nourished themselves only with fruits, with *zapotes*, *matasanos*, and *jocotes*. And they did not eat any *tortillas*. Now if there were seventeen men who made sacrifice, or ten who fasted, the truth is they did not eat. They fulfilled their great precepts, and thus showed their position as lords.

Neither had they women to sleep with, but they remained alone, fasting. They were in the House of God, all day they prayed, burning incense and making sacrifices. Thus they remained from dusk until dawn, grieving in their hearts and in their breasts, and begging for happiness and life for their sons and vassals as well as for their kingdom, and raising their faces to the sky.

Here are their petitions to their god, when they prayed; and this was the supplication of their hearts:

"Oh, Thou, beauty of the day! Thou, Huracán,<sup>6</sup> Thou, Heart of Heaven and of Earth! Thou, giver of richness, and giver of the daughters and the sons! Turn toward us your power and your riches; grant life and growth unto my sons and vassals; let those who must maintain and nourish Thee multiply and increase; those who invoke Thee on the roads, in the fields, on the banks of the rivers, in the ravines, under the trees, under the vines.

"Give them daughters and sons. Let them not meet disgrace, nor misfortune, let not the deceiver come behind or before them. Let them not fall, let them not be wounded, let them not fornicate, nor be condemned by justice. Let them not fall on the descent or on the ascent of the road. Let them not encounter obstacles back of them or before them, nor anything which strikes them. Grant them good roads, beautiful, level roads. Let them not have misfortune, nor disgrace, through Thy fault, through Thy sorceries.

"Grant a good life to those who must give Thee sustenance and place food in Thy mouth, in Thy

presence, to Thee, Heart of Heaven, Heart of Earth, Bundle of Majesty. And Thou, Tohil; Thou, Avilix;<sup>7</sup> Thou, Hacavitz,<sup>8</sup> Arch of the Sky, Surface of the Earth, the Four Corners, the Four Cardinal Points. Let there be but peace and tranquility in Thy mouth, in Thy presence, oh, God!"

Thus [spoke] the lords, while within, the nine men fasted, the thirteen men, and the seventeen men. During the day they fasted and their hearts grieved for their sons and vassals and for all their wives and their children when each of the lords made his offering.

This was the price of a happy life, the price of power, the price of the authority of the Ahpop, of the Ahpop-Camhá, of the Galel and of the Ahtzic-Vinac.<sup>9</sup> Two by two they ruled, each pair succeeding the other in order to bear the burden of the people of all the Quiché nation.

One only was the origin of their tradition and [one only] the origin of the manner of maintaining and sustaining, and one only, too, was the origin of the tradition and the customs of those of Tamub and Ilocab and the people of Rabinal and the Cakchiquel, those of Tziquinahá, of Tuhalahá and Uchabahá.<sup>10</sup> And there was but one trunk [a single family] when they heard there in Quiché what all of them were to do.

But it was not only thus that they reigned. They did not squander the gifts of those whom they sustained and nourished, but they ate and drank them. Neither did they buy them; they had won and seized their empire, their power, and their sovereignty.

And it was not at small cost, that they conquered the fields and the towns; the small towns and the large towns paid high ransoms; they brought precious stones and metals, they brought honey of the bees, bracelets, bracelets of emeralds and other stones, and brought garlands made of blue feathers, the tribute of all the towns. They

<sup>6</sup>One of Tohil's names.

<sup>7</sup>The god of Balam-Acab, one of the founders of the Quiché state.

<sup>8</sup>The god of the Ahau-Quiché, one of the three royal houses of the Quiché (see note 9).

<sup>9</sup>The Quiché had three royal houses. The Cavec supplied its two chief rulers (note 3). The Galel was a court official who was also king of the House of Nihai; the Ahtzic-Vinac was head of the House of Ahau Quiché.

<sup>10</sup>Various Quiché tribes and regions.



came into the presence of the marvelous kings Gucumatz and Cotuhá, and before Quicab and Cavizimah,<sup>11</sup> the Ahpop, the Ahpop-Camhá, the Galel, and the Ahtzic-Vinac.

It was not little what they did, neither were few, the tribes which they conquered. Many branches of the tribes came to pay tribute to the

Quiché; full of sorrow they came to give it over. Nevertheless, the [Quiché] power did not grow quickly. Gucumatz it was, who began the aggrandizement of the kingdom. Thus was the beginning of his aggrandizement and that of the Quiché nation.

<sup>11</sup>See note 4.

## Governing the Inca Empire



### ▼ *Pedro de Cieza de León, CHRONICLES*

Because no society of South America developed a system of writing, there are no written records of South America's civilizations prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. Our best sources for their preconquest history are, therefore, archeological artifacts and accounts composed by sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Amerindian and Spanish writers who labored to preserve the memory of a past in imminent danger of being lost forever. One such ethnohistorian was Pedro de Cieza de León (1520–1554), who in 1535 arrived in the Americas as a teenage soldier-adventurer and spent the next seventeen years trekking throughout South America, falling increasingly under the spell of the continent and its native peoples. As he traveled and fought, he constantly took detailed notes of all he had observed and experienced. Believing, as he noted, that “we and the Indians have the same origin,” Cieza wrote with great sympathy for the many different Amerindian cultures he encountered, even though he seems never to have doubted the righteousness of the Spanish conquest and conversion of these peoples. Indeed, one of his primary reasons for recording his observations was that he considered it “right that the world know how so great a multitude of these Indians were brought into the sanctity of the Church.”

Although Cieza's *Chronicles* describe many different native South American cultures, their greatest value to modern historians is the wealth of detail they provide of the Inca Empire and the Quechua Amerindians who had created it. Like the Aztecs of Mexico far to their north, the Quechuas were recent arrivals on the scene who fashioned a civilization that borrowed heavily from a variety of preceding cultures. Also like the Aztec Empire, the Inca Empire was young, having taken shape during the reigns of Pachacuti (1438–1471) and his son Topac Yupanqui (1471–1493). As was also true in Mexico, its life was prematurely cut short by *conquistadores*.

In the following selection Cieza describes how the Inca monarchs governed an empire that covered about one-half million square miles, stretched some twenty-five hundred miles from end to end, and included anywhere from six to thirteen million people of different ethnic origins and languages.

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What devices did the Incas use to govern their vast empire?
2. How did the Inca Empire manage to function without a system of writing?
3. From Cieza's perspective, what were the most admirable qualities of this empire?
4. What appear to have been the strengths of this empire? Can you perceive any weaknesses? Were the Incas aware of these shortcomings, and, if so, how did they attempt to counter them?

It is told for a fact of the rulers of this kingdom that in the days of their rule they had their representatives in the capitals of all the provinces, . . . for in all these places there were larger and finer lodgings than in most of the other cities of this great kingdom, and many storehouses. They served as the head of the provinces or regions, and from every so many leagues<sup>1</sup> around the tributes were brought to one of these capitals, and from so many others, to another. This was so well organized that there was not a village that did not know where it was to send its tribute. In all these capitals the Incas had temples of the sun, mints, and many silversmiths who did nothing but work rich pieces of gold or fair vessels of silver; large garrisons were stationed there, and, as I have said, a steward or representative who was in command of them all, to whom an accounting of everything that was brought in was made, and who, in turn, had to give one of all that was issued. And these governors could in no way interfere with the jurisdiction of another who held a similar post, but within his own, if there were any disorder or disturbance, he had authority to punish it[s perpetrators], especially if it were in the nature of a conspiracy or a rebellion, or failure to obey the Inca,<sup>2</sup> for full power

resided in these governors. And if the Incas had not had the foresight to appoint them and to establish the *mitimaes*,<sup>3</sup> the natives would have often revolted and shaken off the royal rule; but with the many troops and the abundance of provisions, they could not effect this unless they had all plotted such treason or rebellion together. This happened rarely, for these governors who were named were of complete trust, all of them *Orejones*,<sup>4</sup> and most of them had their holdings, or *chacaras*, in the neighborhood of *Cuzco*,<sup>5</sup> and their homes and kinfolk. If one of them did not show sufficient capacity for his duties, he was removed and another put in his place.

When one of them came to Cuzco on private business or to see the Inca, he left a lieutenant in his place, not one who aspired to the post, but one he knew would faithfully carry out what he was ordered to do and what was best for the service of the Inca. And if one of these governors or delegates died while in office, the natives at once sent word to the Inca how and of what he had died, and even transported the body by the post road if this seemed to them advisable. The tribute paid by each of these districts where the capital was situated and that turned over by the natives, whether gold, silver, clothing, arms, and

<sup>1</sup>A league is three miles.

<sup>2</sup>*Inca* means "sovereign lord," and in its strictest sense should be used only to refer to this civilization's god-kings. Today, however, historians customarily use the term loosely to refer to the civilization, its empire, and the Quechua people who created them.

<sup>3</sup>Literally, "those moved from one land to another." This was the systematic practice of resettling groups from one area of the empire to another. These resettled people would serve as a check on the loyalties of the natives of the region

to which they had been transferred and would, in turn, be kept in check by their new neighbors. This helped keep down rebellions and broke down regional and ethnic differences within the empire; it also was a means of cultivating land that needed settlers.

<sup>4</sup>Literally in Spanish, "big-ears." They were members of the ruling class, often of royal blood, who were distinguished by the large ear plugs they wore.

<sup>5</sup>The capital city of the empire.

all else they gave, was entered in the accounts of . . . [those] who kept the *quipus*<sup>6</sup> and did everything ordered by the governor in the matter of finding the soldiers or supplying whomever the Inca ordered, or making delivery to Cuzco; but when they came from the city of Cuzco to go over the accounts, or they were ordered to go to Cuzco to give an accounting, the accountants themselves gave it by the quipu, or went to give it where there could be no fraud, but everything had to come out right. Few years went by in which an accounting of all these things was not made. . . .

Realizing how difficult it would be to travel the great distances of their land where every league and at every turn a different language was spoken, and how bothersome it would be to have to employ interpreters to understand them, these rulers, as the best measure, ordered and decreed, with severe punishment for failure to obey, that all the natives of their empire should know and understand the language of Cuzco, both they and their women. This was so strictly enforced that an infant had not yet left its mother's breast before they began to teach it the language it had to know. And although at the beginning this was difficult and many stubbornly refused to learn any language but their own, the Incas were so forceful that they accomplished what they had proposed, and all had to do their bidding. This was carried out so faithfully that in the space of a few years a single tongue was known and used in an extension of more than 1,200 leagues, yet, even though this language was employed, they all spoke their own [languages], which were so numerous that if I were to list them it would not be credited. . . .

As the city of Cuzco was the most important in all Peru, and the Incas lived there most of the time, they had with them in the city many of the leading men of the country, the most intelligent and informed of all, as their advisers. For all agree that before they undertook anything of

importance, they discussed it with these counselors, and submitted their opinion to that of the majority. And for the administration of the city, and that the highways should be safe and nowhere should offenses or thefts be committed, from among the most highly esteemed of them he [the Inca] appointed those whose duty it was to punish wrongdoers, and to this end they were always traveling about the country. The Incas took such care to see that justice was meted out that nobody ventured to commit a felony or theft. This was to deal with thieves, ravishers of women, or conspirators against the Inca; however, there were many provinces that warred on one another, and the Incas were not wholly able to prevent this.

By the river that runs through Cuzco justice was executed on those who were caught or brought in as prisoners from some other place. There they had their heads cut off, or were put to death in some other manner which they chose. Mutiny and conspiracy were severely punished, and, above all, those who were thieves and known as such; even their wives and children were despised and considered to be tarred with the same brush. . . .

We have written how it was ordered by the Incas that the statues be brought out at their feasts, and how they selected from the wisest among their men those who should tell what the life of their kings had been and how they had conducted themselves in the rule of their kingdoms, for the purpose I have stated. It should also be known that, aside from this, it was the custom among them, and a rule carefully observed, for each of them to choose during his reign three or four old men of their nation, skilled and gifted for that purpose, whom they ordered to recall all that had happened in the province during the time of their reign, whether prosperous or adverse, and to make and arrange songs so that thereby it might be known in the future what had taken place in the past. Such songs

<sup>6</sup>The Quechua system of record keeping by means of knotted strings that León describes later in this excerpt.



could not be sung or proclaimed outside the presence of the Inca, and those who were to carry out this behest were ordered to say nothing referring to the Inca during his lifetime, but after he was dead, they said to his successor almost in these words: "Oh, mighty and powerful Inca, may the Sun and Moon, the Earth, the hills and trees, the stones and your forefathers guard you from misfortune and make you prosperous, happy, and blessed among all who have been born. Know that the things that happened to your predecessor were these." And saying this, with their eyes on the ground and heads hanging, with great humility they gave an account and report of all they knew, which they could do very well, for there were many among them of great memory, subtle wit, and lively intelligence, and abounding in knowledge, as those of us who are here and hear them can bear witness. After they said this, when the Inca had heard them, he sent for other of his old Indians whom he ordered to learn the songs the others bore in their memory, and to prepare new ones of what took place during the time of his reign, what was spent, what the provinces contributed, and put all this down in the quipus, so that after his death, when his successor reigned, what had been given and contributed would be known. And except on days of great celebration, or on the occasion of mourning and lament for the death of a brother or son of the Inca, for on such days it was permitted to relate their grandeur and their origin and birth, at no other time was it permitted to deal with this, for it had been forbidden by their lords, and if they did so, they were severely punished.

[The Indians] had a method of knowing how the tributes of food supplies should be levied on the provinces when the Lord-Inca came through with his army, or was visiting the kingdom; or, when nothing of this sort was taking place, what came into the storehouses and what was issued to the subjects, so nobody could be unduly burdened. . . . This involved the quipus, which are long strands of knotted strings, and those who were the accountants and understood the mean-

ing of these knots could reckon by them expenditures or other things that had taken place many years before. By these knots they counted from one to ten and from ten to a hundred, and from a hundred to a thousand. On one of these strands there is the account of one thing, and on the other of another, in such a way that what to us is a strange, meaningless account is clear to them. In the capital of each province there were accountants whom they called *quipu-camayocs*, and by these knots they kept the account of the tribute to be paid by the natives of that district in silver, gold, clothing, flocks, down to wood and other more insignificant things, and by these same quipus at the end of a year, or ten, or twenty years, they gave a report to the one whose duty it was to check the account so exact that not even a pair of sandals was missing. . . .

The *Orejones* of Cuzco who supplied me with information are in agreement that in olden times, in the days of the Lord-Incas, all the villages and provinces of Peru were notified that a report should be given to the rulers and their representatives each year of the men and women who had died, and all who had been born, for this was necessary for the levying of the tributes as well as to know how many were available for war and those who could assume the defense of the villages. This was an easy matter, for each province at the end of the year had a list by the knots of the quipus of all the people who had died there during the year, as well as of those who had been born. At the beginning of the new year they came to Cuzco, bringing their quipus, which told how many births there had been during the year, and how many deaths. This was reported with all truth and accuracy, without any fraud or deceit. In this way the Inca and the governors knew which of the Indians were poor, the women who had been widowed, whether they were able to pay their taxes, and how many men they could count on in the event of war, and many other things they considered highly important.

As this kingdom was so vast, as I have repeatedly mentioned, in each of the many provinces there were many storehouses filled with supplies

and other needful things; thus, in times of war, wherever the armies went they drew upon the contents of these storehouses, without ever touching the supplies of their confederates or laying a finger on what they had in their settlements. And when there was no war, all this stock of supplies and food was divided up among the poor and the widows. These poor were the aged, or the lame, crippled, or paralyzed, or those afflicted with some other diseases; if they were in good health, they received nothing. Then the storehouses were filled up once more with the tributes paid the Inca. If there came a lean year, the storehouses were opened and the provinces were lent what they needed in the way of supplies; then, in a year of abundance, they paid back all they had received. Even though the tributes paid to the Inca were used only for the aforesaid purposes, they were employed to advantage, for in this way their kingdom was opulent and well supplied.

No one who was lazy or tried to live by the work of others was tolerated; everyone had to work. Thus on certain days each lord went to his lands and took the plow in hand and cultivated the earth, and did other things. Even the Incas themselves did this to set an example, for everybody was to know that there should be nobody so rich that, on this account, he might disdain or affront the poor. And under their system there was none such in all the kingdom, for, if he had his health, he worked and lacked for nothing; and if he was ill, he received what he needed from the storehouses. And no rich man could deck himself out in more finery than the poor, or wear different clothing, except the rulers and headmen, who, to maintain their dignity, were allowed great freedom and privilege, as well as the *Orejones*, who held a place apart among all the peoples.





## Traveling the Silk Road



### ▼ *Marco Polo, DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD*

No chapter on trans-Eurasian travel in the Mongol Age would be complete without a selection from Marco Polo (ca. 1253–1324), a Venetian who spent twenty years in East Asia. A few scholars have questioned whether Marco Polo ever went to China, and some have even wondered whether he ever existed. Their conclusions, largely built on arguments from silence, in which they point to what Polo's account does not mention and to the absence of his name in all known Chinese records (despite his claim to have been in the service of Kubilai Khan), have failed to win widespread support within the academic community. As the issue currently stands, there seems to be no good reason to doubt the basic historicity of Marco Polo's account of his years in China, even though the story, as we have received it, contains undoubted exaggeration and human error — error that was compounded by the manner in which Polo's story was transmitted to posterity.

Around 1260 Marco's father and uncle, Niccoló and Maffeo, both merchants from Venice, set sail for the Black Sea and from there made an overland trek to the court of Kubilai. When they were preparing to return home, the Great Khan requested that they visit the pope and ask him to send one hundred missionary-scholars to Cathay (northern China). The Polos arrived at the crusader port of Acre (in modern Israel) in 1269 and in 1271 received a commission from Pope Gregory X (r. 1271–1276) to return to China with two Dominican friars. The two friars quickly abandoned the expedition, afraid of the dangers that awaited them, but Niccoló's seventeen-year-old son, Marco, was made of sterner stuff. The brothers Polo, now accompanied by young Marco, began the long trek back to northern China and the court of Kubilai, arriving there in 1274 or 1275. Here apparently Marco entered the service of the Great Khan, but it is impossible to say with certainty what offices he held. Whatever the truth about Polo's position, it is clear that for close to two decades he traveled extensively over much of Kubilai's empire, and he probably functioned, at least occasionally, as one of the many foreign officials serving the Mongol, or *Yuan*, Dynasty (1271–1368).

In 1290 or 1292 the three men set sail for the West by way of the Indian Ocean and arrived home in Venice in 1295. In 1298 Marco was captured in a war with Genoa and, while in prison, related his adventures to a writer of romances known as Rustichello of Pisa. Together they produced a rambling, often disjointed account of the sites, peoples, personalities, and events Marco had encountered in Asia.

Despite its literary flaws and a self-puffery that was obvious even to fourteenth-century contemporaries, the book was widely translated and distributed throughout late medieval Europe. Its popularity was due in part to Marco's eye for detail, as the book abounds with stories and descriptions of phenomena that Westerners found fascinatingly different.

In the following selection Polo describes his journey to Cathay along the portion of the Silk Road that skirts the southern fringes of the forbidding *Taklamakan Desert*. The term *Silk Road* conjures up every sort of romantic notion in modern readers, but for the men and women who journeyed along its many routes it was anything but romantic, even though towns along the way did offer pleasures and even exotic experiences. The fact that it took the Polos about three and one-half years to travel from Acre to Shangdu, the summer palace of the Great Khan, suggests how difficult and dangerous the journey was.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What were the dangers for travelers along this portion of the Silk Road?
2. Despite the dangers, what made the journey possible and even bearable?
3. Why did people inhabit towns and cities along this route?
4. What dangers did these urban people encounter?
5. What impact did the Mongols have on this part of the Silk Road?

Let us turn next to the province of Yarkand,<sup>1</sup> five days' journey in extent. The inhabitants follow the law of Mahomet,<sup>2</sup> and there are also some Nestorian Christians.<sup>3</sup> They are subject to the Great Khan's nephew,<sup>4</sup> of whom I have already spoken. It is amply stocked with the means of life, especially cotton. But, since there is nothing here worth mentioning in our book, we shall pass on to Khotan,<sup>5</sup> which lies towards the east-north-east.

Khotan is a province eight days' journey in extent, which is subject to the Great Khan. The inhabitants all worship Mahomet. It has cities and towns in plenty, of which the most splendid, and the capital of the kingdom, bears the same name as the province, Khotan. It is amply stocked with the means of life. Cotton grows here in plenty. It has vineyards, estates, and orchards

in plenty. The people live by trade and industry; they are not at all warlike.

Passing on from here we come to the province of Pem, five days' journey in extent, towards the east-north-east. Here too the inhabitants worship Mahomet and are subject to the Great Khan. It has villages and towns in plenty. The most splendid city and the capital of the province is called Pem. There are rivers here in which are found stones called jasper and chalcedony<sup>6</sup> in plenty. There is no lack of the means of life. Cotton is plentiful. The inhabitants live by trade and industry.

The following custom is prevalent among them. When a woman's husband leaves her to go on a journey of more than twenty days, then, as soon as he has left, she takes another husband, and this she is fully entitled to do by local us-

<sup>1</sup>Yarkand is on the southwestern border of the *Taklamakan Desert*, which is located in the Tarim Basin. The *Taklamakan*, whose name means "those who enter never return," cannot support human life. Travelers must decide whether to take the fork that skirts the northern edge of this six-hundred-mile-long wilderness of sand (the Northern Tarim Route) or the southern fork (the Southern Tarim Route). Yarkand is the first major city on the Southern Tarim Route — for those traveling from the west.

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad. Many Western Christians thought *Mahomet* was a god whom Muslims worshiped (see below).

<sup>3</sup>Various Turkish tribes had adopted this form of Christianity.

<sup>4</sup>Kaidu.

<sup>5</sup>The next major city along this route.

<sup>6</sup>Two highly valued quartz crystals.

age. And the men, wherever they go, take wives in the same way.

You should know that all the provinces I have described, from Kashgar<sup>7</sup> to Pem and some way beyond, are provinces of Turkestan.<sup>8</sup>

I will tell you next of another province of Turkestan, lying east-north-east, which is called Charchan. It used to be a splendid and fruitful country, but it has been much devastated by the Tartars.<sup>9</sup> The inhabitants worship Mahomet. There are villages and towns in plenty, and the chief city of the kingdom is Charchan.<sup>10</sup> There are rivers producing jasper and chalcedony, which are exported for sale in Cathay and bring in a good profit; for they are plentiful and of good quality.

All this province is a tract of sand; and so is the country from Khotan to Pem and from Pem to here. There are many springs of bad and bitter water, though in some places the water is good and sweet. When it happens that an army passes through the country, if it is a hostile one, the people take flight with their wives and children and their beasts two or three days' journey into the sandy wastes to places where they know that there is water and they can live with their beasts. And I assure you that no one can tell which way they have gone, because the wind covers their tracks with sand, so that there is nothing to show where they have been, but the country looks as if it had never been traversed by man or beast. That is how they escape from their enemies. But, if it happens that a friendly army passes that way, they merely drive off their beasts, because they do not want to have them seized and eaten; for the armies never pay for what they take. And you should know that, when they harvest their grain, they store it far from any habitation, in

certain caves among these wastes, for fear of the armies; and from these stores they bring home what they need month by month.

After leaving Charchan, the road runs for fully five days through sandy wastes, where the water is bad and bitter, except in a few places where it is good and sweet; and there is nothing worth noting in our book. At the end of the five days' journey towards the east-north-east, is a city which stands on the verge of the Great Desert. It is here that men take in provisions for crossing the desert. Let us move on accordingly and proceed with our narrative.

The city I have mentioned, which stands at the point where the traveler enters the Great Desert, is a big city called Lop, and the desert is called the Desert of Lop.<sup>11</sup> The city is subject to the Great Khan, and the inhabitants worship Mahomet. I can tell you that travelers who intend to cross the desert rest in this town for a week to refresh themselves and their beasts. At the end of the week they stock up with a month's provisions for themselves and their beasts. Then they leave the town and enter the desert.

This desert is reported to be so long that it would take a year to go from end to end; and at the narrowest point it takes a month to cross it. It consists entirely of mountains and sand and valleys. There is nothing at all to eat. But I can tell you that after traveling a day and a night you find drinking water<sup>12</sup> — not enough water to supply a large company, but enough for fifty or a hundred men with their beasts. And all the way through the desert you must go for a day and a night before you find water. And I can tell you that in three or four places you find the water bitter and brackish; but at all the other

<sup>7</sup>Kashgar, on the extreme western end of the Taklamakan, is where the northern and southern forks branch, for those traveling from the west.

<sup>8</sup>The region of Central Asia inhabited by Turkic peoples.

<sup>9</sup>Mongols not Tatars. See source 104, note 1.

<sup>10</sup>Known to the Chinese as Shanshan, it was the next significant city along the Southern Tarim Route.

<sup>11</sup>On the eastern edge of the Taklamakan Desert is a salt-encrusted plain of hard-baked clay known as the Lop Nor (the Salt Sea) — the dried bed of an ancient sea.

<sup>12</sup>Streams from distant mountains, which long ago made this a great inland salt sea, create oases.



watering-places, that is, twenty-eight in all, the water is good. Beasts and birds there are none, because they find nothing to eat. But I assure you that one thing is found here, and that a very strange one, which I will relate to you.

The truth is this. When a man is riding by night through this desert and something happens to make him loiter and lose touch with his companions, by dropping asleep or for some other reason, and afterwards he wants to rejoin them, then he hears spirits talking in such a way that they seem to be his companions. Sometimes, indeed, they even hail him by name. Often these voices make him stray from the path, so that he never finds it again. And in this way many travelers have been lost and have perished. And sometimes in the night they are conscious of a noise like the clatter of a great cavalcade of riders away from the road; and, believing that these are some of their own company, they go where they hear the noise and, when day breaks, find they are victims of an illusion and in an awkward plight. And there are some who, in crossing this desert, have seen a host of men coming towards them and, suspecting that they were robbers, have taken flight; so, having left the beaten track and not knowing how to return to it, they have gone hopelessly astray. Yes, and even by daylight men hear these spirit voices, and often you fancy you are listening to the strains of many instruments, especially drums, and the clash of arms. For this reason bands of travelers make a point of keeping very close together. Before they go to sleep they set up a sign pointing in the direction in which they have to travel. And round the necks of all their beasts they fasten little bells, so that by listening to the sound they may prevent them from straying off the path.

That is how they cross the desert, with all the discomfort of which you have heard. . . .

▼ ▼ ▼

Now I will tell you of some other cities, which lie towards the north-west near the edge of this desert.<sup>13</sup>

The province of Kamul, which used to be a kingdom, contains towns and villages in plenty, the chief town being also called Kamul.<sup>14</sup> The province lies between two deserts, the Great Desert and a small one three days' journey in extent.<sup>15</sup> The inhabitants are all idolaters<sup>16</sup> and speak a language of their own. They live on the produce of the soil; for they have a superfluity of foodstuffs and beverages, which they sell to travelers who pass that way. They are a very gay folk, who give no thought to anything but making music, singing and dancing, and reading and writing according to their own usage, and taking great delight in the pleasures of the body. I give you my word that if a stranger comes to a house here to seek hospitality he receives a very warm welcome. The host bids his wife do everything that the guest wishes. Then he leaves the house and goes about his own business and stays away two or three days. Meanwhile the guest stays with his wife in the house and does what he will with her, lying with her in one bed just as if she were his own wife; and they lead a gay life together. All the men of this city and province are thus cuckolded by their wives; but they are not the least ashamed of it. And the women are beautiful and vivacious and always ready to oblige.

Now it happened during the reign of Mongu Khan,<sup>17</sup> lord of the Tartars, that he was informed of this custom that prevailed among the men of Kamul of giving their wives in adultery to outsiders. Mongu thereupon commanded them under heavy penalties to desist from this form of hospitality. When they received this command, they were greatly distressed; but for three years

<sup>13</sup>Polo now shifts to the Northern Tarim Route. He does not claim that Kamul and the other cities that he describes in this aside were on his route eastward. Indeed, the whole tone of this section suggests he heard about these sites during his stay in China.

<sup>14</sup>The modern city of Hami.

<sup>15</sup>This smaller desert has to be the edge of the Gobi Desert, which is not a small desert and is not crossed in three days.

<sup>16</sup>Buddhists.

<sup>17</sup>Kubilai's older brother and Great Khan from 1251 to 1259.

they reluctantly obeyed. Then they held a council and talked the matter over, and this is what they did. They took a rich gift and sent it to Mongu and entreated him to let them use their wives according to the traditions of their ancestors; for their ancestors had declared that by the pleasure they gave to guests with their wives and

goods they won the favor of their idols and multiplied the yield of their crops and their tillage. When Mongu Khan heard this he said: 'Since you desire your own shame, you may have it.' So he let them have their way. And I can assure you that since then they have always upheld this tradition and uphold it still.

## The Land of Seyon: Fourteenth-Century Ethiopia



### ▼ THE GLORIOUS VICTORIES OF 'AMDA SEYON

*Ethiopia*, a kingdom to the southeast of ancient Kush (or Nubia) in Africa's north-east highlands, looks out across the Red Sea to Yemen, the southwestern portion of the Arabian Peninsula. Settlers from Yemen crossed these waters, perhaps as early as the seventh century B.C.E., and mixed with the indigenous inhabitants to produce a hybrid civilization whose language, *Ge'ez*, was essentially Semitic but contained significant Kushitic elements. Because of its strategic location astride a trade route that linked Egypt and the Mediterranean World with the markets of East Africa, Arabia, and India, Ethiopia flourished. A Greek shipping manual of the first century C.E. notes that Adulis, Ethiopia's port on the Red Sea, was north-east Africa's premier center for the ivory trade.

According to Ethiopian chronicles, in 333 King Ezāna (r. 320–350) converted to Christianity and made it the official religion of his realm. In the years that followed the Ethiopian people gradually adopted the new faith. Like the Egyptians and Nubians to their north, the Ethiopians later adopted a type of Christian-



ity known as *Monophysitism* (from the Greek words for “one nature”). This form of Christian belief, which arose in the fifth century, centered on a doctrine that deemphasized Jesus’ humanity to the point of maintaining that he had a single, divine nature. When the Churches of Constantinople and Rome condemned Monophysite teachings as heresy in 451, the Ethiopian Church was doctrinally cut off from these two centers of Christianity. The Arab-Muslim conquest of Egypt in the 640s further cut Ethiopia off from its Christian coreligionists in Byzantium and the West. In time, most of previously Christian Egypt converted to Islam, although its native Christians, known as *Coptic Christians*, remained a significant minority, as they are today. Egypt, the land that had introduced Christianity to Nubia and Ethiopia, was now an Islamic stronghold. On their part, Nubians and Ethiopians vigorously fought to retain their political autonomy and Christian identity in the face of Islamic pressure from Egypt. After the mid thirteenth century, however, Nubian resistance to Islam weakened. By the mid fourteenth century Nubia no longer had an independent Christian monarchy, and the Christian faith was fast losing out to Islam. By the sixteenth century, Nubia’s Christian population was a minority and would remain so down to the present. (Nubia today is the nation of Sudan.)

Farther to the south, Ethiopia, fairly secure in its mountain strongholds, continued to hold out against Islam. The following document, composed by an eyewitness to the events, tells the story of how King ‘Amda Seyon I (r. 1314–1344), whose throne name was *Gabra Masqal* (servant of the cross), resisted an invasion in 1329 by Sabr ad-Din, the ruler of Ifat, a nearby Islamic principality. More than simply a monarch on the defensive, ‘Amda Seyon was a militant expansionist, who in his thirty-year reign undertook a series of offensive operations against neighboring Islamic states and achieved significant success at their expense. Between 1320 and 1340 he managed to bring Ifat and other Islamic states of the highland plateau under the control of his expanding kingdom. As the chronicle points out, Sabr ad-Din was actually a tributary prince who revolted against ‘Amda Seyon’s authority.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What picture emerges of Muslim-Christian relations in fourteenth-century Ethiopia?
2. The Christian Ethiopian attitude toward Jews and Judaism has been characterized as ambivalent. Do you find in this source any evidence to support such a judgment? Please be specific in your answer.
3. Reread Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Ecclesiastical History* (Chapter 7, source 50). Do you see any parallels between the tone and message of that source and this document? What are they? What conclusions do you draw?

Let us write, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the power and the victory which God wrought by the hands of 'Amda Seyon king of Ethiopia, whose throne-name is Gabra Masqal. . . . Now the king of Ethiopia . . . heard that the king of the Rebels<sup>1</sup> had revolted, and in his arrogance was unfaithful to him, making himself great, like the Devil who set himself above his creator and exalted himself like the Most High. The king of the Rebels, whose name was Sabradin, was full of arrogance towards his lord 'Amda Seyon, and said, "I will be king over all the land of Ethiopia; I will rule the Christians according to my law, and I will destroy their churches." And having said this, he arose and set out and came to the land of the Christians, and killed some of them; and those who survived, both men and women, he took prisoner and converted them to his religion.

And after this he said, "I will nominate governors over the provinces of Ethiopia." . . . And he appointed governors over all the provinces of Ethiopia, even those which he had not been able to reach.

But the feet cannot become the head, nor the earth the sky, nor the servant the master. That perverse one, the son of a viper, of the seed of a serpent, the son of a stranger from the race of Satan, thought covetously of the throne of David<sup>2</sup> and said, "I will rule in Seyon,"<sup>3</sup> for pride entered into his heart, as into the Devil his father. He said, "I will make the Christian churches into mosques for the Muslims, and I will convert to my religion the king of the Christians together with his people, and I will nominate him governor of one province, and if he refuses to be converted to my religion I will deliver him to the

herdsmen . . . that they make him a herder of camels. As for the queen Zan Mangesa, the wife of the king, I will make her work at the mill." . . .

Saying this, he collected all the troops of the Muslims, and chose from among them the ablest and most intelligent. These in truth were not able and intelligent, but fools, men full of error, impostors who foretell the future by means of sand and take omens from the sun and moon and stars of heaven, who say, "We observe the stars," but they have knowledge only of evil, they have no knowledge of God, their knowledge is of men which fades and perishes, for as Saint Paul says, "God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world."<sup>4</sup>

Let us return to the original subject. This evil man then questioned the diviners, saying, "Now tell me, I pray you, shall we conquer when we fight with the king of the Christians?" And one of them rose, a prophet of darkness. . . .

When Sabradin the king of the Rebels examined him, this diviner answered him persuasively, saying, "Behold, the kingdom of the Christians is finished; it shall be given to us, and you shall reign in Seyon. Rise, make war on the king of the Christians, and conquering you shall rule him and his people." And all the diviners said likewise. So the Rebel king sent into all the lands of the Muslims and called together his troops, and formed them into three divisions: one division set out for the land of Amhara, another set out for the land of Angot, and he himself prepared for war and set out to invade Shoa where the king was, — the slave of slaves against the prince of princes, the tail of the dog against the head of the lion, trusting in the false prediction that the Christian kingdom was come to an end.

<sup>1</sup>The word *'elwan*, translated here as "Rebels," can also be translated as "infidels," or nonbelievers.

<sup>2</sup>The Ethiopian royal family, known as the *Solomonic Dynasty* (1270–1974), claimed descent from the union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon of Israel (r. ca. 962–922 B.C.E.), son of King David. See the Bible, 1 Kings, 10:1–13, and 2 Chronicles, 9:1–12, for an account of the queen's visit to King Solomon. According to Ethiopian tradition, *Menelik*, son of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon

and first king of Ethiopia, brought the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia, where it is still revered as the country's most sacred relic.

<sup>3</sup>The Ge'ez transliteration of *Zion*, one of Jerusalem's hills and a common symbolic term for Jerusalem and even the entire Holy Land. Here *Seyon* refers to Ethiopia because the Ethiopians claim partial Hebraic descent (note 2). 'Amda Seyon means *pillar of Zion*.

<sup>4</sup>The Bible, 1 Corinthians, 1:20.

As for us, we have heard and we know from the Holy Scriptures that the kingdom of the Muslims, established for but seven hundred years, shall cease to be at the proper time. But the kingdom of the Christians shall continue till the second coming of the Son of God, according to the words of Holy Scripture; and above all we know that the kingdom of Ethiopia shall endure till the coming of Christ, of which David prophesied saying "Ethiopia shall stretch her hands unto God."<sup>5</sup>

The messengers whom the king had sent to that Rebel returned to him the whole answer of the renegade, that rebel against righteousness. Hearing the insults of the evil man, the king called together his commanders. . . . He sent them forth to war against the evil Sabradin on the 24th day of Yakatit,<sup>6</sup> saying to them, "May God give you strength and victory, and may He help you." . . . And they fought with him and forced him out of his residence; and he fled before them. And they defeated him through the power of God. . . . And they pursued him till sunset; but he escaped them, going by a different road. God threw him down from his glory. . . .

Then the army of the king set forth and attacked the camp of the Rebel. They looted the rebel king's treasure houses and took gold and silver and fine clothes and jewels without number. They killed men and women, old men and children; the corpses of the slain filled a large space. And those who survived were made prisoners, and there were left none but those who had escaped with that evil man. But the soldiers could not find a place to camp because of the foul smell of the corpses; and they went to another place and made their camp there. . . .

The king, hearing that the Rebel had escaped, went into the tabernacle<sup>7</sup> and approached the altar; seizing the horns of the altar<sup>8</sup> he implored mercy of Jesus Christ saying, "Hear the petition of my heart and reject not the prayer of my lips, and shut not the gates of Thy mercy because of my sins, but send me Thy good angel to guide me on my road to pursue mine enemy who has set himself above Thy sheep and above Thy holy name." And having said this, he gave an offering to the church of colored hangings for the altar, and went out. Then he sent other troops, . . . cavalry and foot-soldiers, strong and skilled in war, powerful without comparison in warfare and battle; he sent their commander . . . to make war in the land of the renegades who are like Jews, the crucifiers,<sup>9</sup> . . . Because like the Jews, the crucifiers, they denied Christ, he sent troops to destroy and devastate them and subject them to the rule of Christ. . . .

The Rebel was filled with fear, and not knowing where to turn, for fear had taken possession of him, he sent to the queen<sup>10</sup> saying, "I have done wrong to my lord the king, I have wrought injustice against him, and it is better that I fall into his hands than into the hands of a stranger. I will come myself and surrender to him, that he may do what he will to me." Thereupon the queen went to tell the king the whole of the message from that Rebel Sabradin, whose acts, like his name 'broken judgment,'<sup>11</sup> consist of insults, mad rage, errors, contentions, and arrogance. When the king heard this message which the Rebel had sent to the queen, he was exceedingly angry, and said to the queen, "Do you send him a message and say: 'If you come, or if you do not come, it will not trouble me; but if you go to a distant country I will pursue you through

<sup>5</sup>The Bible, Psalms, 68:31.

<sup>6</sup>February 18, 1329.

<sup>7</sup>A tent used as a chapel in the king's camp.

<sup>8</sup>As was the fashion in ancient Israel, Ethiopian altars had horns on all four corners. Suppliants would grasp one while praying.

<sup>9</sup>The *Falasbas*, or Ethiopian Jews, are Kushitic people whose ancestors had intermarried with Jewish immigrants from

Yemen. They are termed *crucifiers* here because of the notion that the Jews were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion.

<sup>10</sup>Queen Mangesa, wife of King 'Amda Seyon.

<sup>11</sup>A pun. In Ge'ez *sabara* means "break" and *dayn* means "judgment." Actually, the Arabic name Sabr ad-Din means "constant in the faith."



the power of God. And if you go into a cave, or if you just run away, I will not leave you alone nor will I return to my capital till I have taken you.”

Now when he received this message, Sabradin set out and came to the king, and stood before him. And the king asked him, saying, “Why have you behaved thus to me? The gifts which you formerly sent to me you have given to your servants; and the multitude of goods of silver and gold which I gave to the poor you have taken away. Those who traded with me you have bound in chains; and what is worse, you have aspired to the throne of my kingdom, in imitation of the Devil your father who wished to be the equal of his creator.” When that Rebel heard these words of the king he was at a loss for an answer in the greatness of his fear, for he was afraid of the king’s presence; and he answered, “Do with me according to your will.” And immediately the soldiers who were on the left and right of the king stood forth in anger and said, “This man is not worthy of life, for he has burnt the churches of God, he has slain Christians, and those whom he did not

kill he has compelled to accept his religion. Moreover he desired to ascend the high mountain of the kingdom.” And some said, “Let us slay him with the edge of the sword”; others said, “Let us stone him to death”; and others again, “Let us burn him with fire that he may disappear from the earth.” And they said to the king, “Think not, O king, that he comes to you honestly and freely, for he trusts in his magic art.” And so saying, they lifted from his bosom and arm a talisman and revealed the form of his magic. Then said the king, “Can your talismans deliver you from my hands in which God has imprisoned you?” And he gave orders for his two hands to be bound with iron chains; he did not wish him to be killed, for he is merciful and forbearing. Thus was taken the Rebel in the net which he himself had woven, and in the snare which he himself had set. . . . After this the king sent news to the capital of his kingdom. . . . “There is good news for you: with the help of your prayers I have defeated my enemy who is also the enemy of Christ.”

## The Fourth Crusade from a Byzantine Perspective



### ▼ *Nicetas Choniates, ANNALS*

As Anna Comnena's account suggests, from the Byzantine perspective, the crusades were nothing less than barbarian invasions from the West. Before the First Crusade ended, Latin and Greek Christians had already clashed on the field of battle, although these initial skirmishes were not terribly serious (except to the people who died in them). During the twelfth century, as Latin fortunes suffered a number of reverses in the Holy Land, two additional major crusades were sent eastward: the Second Crusade (1147–1149) and the Third Crusade (1189–1192). Each further exacerbated Latin-Byzantine relations by engendering increasingly sharp conflicts and misunderstandings.

Following Saladin's recapture of Jerusalem in 1187 and the failure of the Third Crusade to retake the holy city, the West was eager to strike back at Islam. In the early thirteenth century, a force made up largely of French warriors and Venetian sailors planned to strike at Islam by capturing Alexandria in Egypt, thereby relieving pressure on the embattled Latin settlements in the Holy Land. That particular assault never took place. Rather, circumstances led the army and fleet of the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) to Constantinople, where the crusaders became embroiled in a dynastic power struggle between rival imperial claimants. Eventually the crusaders attacked Constantinople on April 12, 1204, and captured it the following day. After three days of brutal looting, the crusaders settled down and established the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204–1261).

The Byzantines regained their capital city in 1261, but their empire was by then largely a shadow of its former self. Just as significant, the events of 1204 caused the final and, until today, irreconcilable rupture between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity.

The Byzantine nobleman, court official, and historian Nicetas Choniates (ca. 1155–ca. 1216) included a vivid account of the Fourth Crusade in his *Annals*, a history that traces Byzantine imperial fortunes from 1118 to 1207. His account is especially telling inasmuch as he was an eyewitness to and victim of the crusaders' capture and pillage of Constantinople. The following selection begins early on the morning of April 13. On the previous day, after bloody and bitter fighting, the crusaders had managed to penetrate the walls of the city and set up a small armed camp within hostile territory. With the situation still in doubt, they spent a sleepless night, wondering what the morning would bring.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Nicetas, how do the crusaders show themselves to be hypocrites?
2. According to Nicetas, what is the crusaders' greatest sin?

### 3. What, does he imply, could Constantinople expect if it were captured by Muslims?

The enemy, who had expected otherwise, found no one openly venturing into battle or taking up arms to resist; they saw that the way was open before them and everything there for the taking. The narrow streets were clear and the crossroads unobstructed, safe from attack, and advantageous to the enemy. The populace, moved by the hope of propitiating them, had turned out to greet them with crosses and venerable icons<sup>1</sup> of Christ as was customary during festivals of solemn processions. But their disposition was not at all affected by what they saw, nor did their lips break into the slightest smile, nor did the unexpected spectacle transform their grim and frenzied glance and fury into a semblance of cheerfulness. Instead, they plundered with impunity and stripped their victims shamelessly, beginning with their carts. Not only did they rob them of their substance but also the articles consecrated to God; the rest fortified themselves all around with defensive weapons as their horses were roused at the sound of the war trumpet.

What then should I recount first and what last of those things dared at that time by these murderous men? O, the shameful dashing to earth of the venerable icons and the flinging of the relics<sup>2</sup> of the saints, who had suffered for Christ's sake, into defiled places! How horrible it was to see the Divine Body and Blood of Christ<sup>3</sup> poured out and thrown to the ground! These forerunners of Antichrist,<sup>4</sup> chief agents and harbingers of his anticipated ungodly deeds, seized as plunder the precious chalices and patens;<sup>5</sup> some they smashed, taking possession of the ornaments embellishing them, and they set the remaining

vessels on their tables to serve as bread dishes and wine goblets. Just as happened long ago, Christ was now disrobed and mocked, his garments were parted, and lots were cast for them by this race; and although his side was not pierced by the lance, yet once more streams of Divine Blood poured to the earth.

The report of the impious acts perpetrated in the Great Church<sup>6</sup> are unwelcome to the ears. The table of sacrifice, fashioned from every kind of precious material and fused by fire into one whole — blended together into a perfection of one multicolored thing of beauty, truly extraordinary and admired by all nations — was broken into pieces and divided among the despoilers, as was the lot of all the sacred church treasures, countless in number and unsurpassed in beauty. They found it fitting to bring out as so much booty the all-hallowed vessels and furnishings which had been wrought with incomparable elegance and craftsmanship from rare materials. In addition, in order to remove the pure silver which overlay the railing of the bema,<sup>7</sup> the wondrous pulpit and the gates, as well as that which covered a great many other adornments, all of which were plated with gold, they led to the very sanctuary of the temple itself mules and asses with packsaddles; some of these, unable to keep their feet on the smoothly polished marble floors, slipped and were pierced by knives so that the excrement from the bowels and the spilled blood defiled the sacred floor. Moreover, a certain silly woman laden with sins . . . the handmaid of demons, the workshop of unspeakable spells and reprehensible charms, waxing wanton against Christ, sat upon the synthronon<sup>8</sup> and intoned a

<sup>1</sup>Sacred pictures.

<sup>2</sup>Highly revered body parts and other items associated with the saints and Jesus (see source 92).

<sup>3</sup>Consecrated eucharistic bread and wine, which both Western and Eastern Christians believed was the actual body and blood of Jesus.

<sup>4</sup>An evil false Christ who will momentarily reign prior to Jesus' Second Coming.

<sup>5</sup>Vessels used in the sacrifice of the Mass.

<sup>6</sup>Hagia Sophia (see source 83).

<sup>7</sup>The sanctuary where Mass is performed.

<sup>8</sup>The patriarch's throne.



song, and then whirled about and kicked up her heels in dance.

It was not that these crimes were committed in this fashion while others were not, or that some acts were more heinous than others, but that the most wicked and impious deeds were perpetrated by all with one accord. Did these madmen, raging thus against the sacred, spare pious matrons and girls of marriageable age or those maidens who, having chosen a life of chastity, were consecrated to God? Above all, it was a difficult and arduous task to mollify the barbarians with entreaties and to dispose them kindly towards us, as they were highly irascible and bilious and unwilling to listen to anything. Everything incited their anger, and they were thought fools and became a laughingstock. He who spoke freely and openly was rebuked, and often the dagger would be drawn against him who expressed a small difference of opinion or who hesitated to carry out their wishes.

The whole head was in pain. There were lamentations and cries of woe and weeping in the narrow ways, wailing at the crossroads, moaning in the temples, outcries of men, screams of women, the taking of captives, and the dragging about, tearing in pieces, and raping of bodies heretofore sound and whole. They who were bashful of their sex were led about naked, they who were venerable in their old age uttered plaintive cries, and the wealthy were despoiled of their riches. Thus it was in the squares, thus it was on the corners, thus it was in the temples, thus it was in the hiding places; for there was no place that could escape detection or that could offer asylum to those who came streaming in.

O Christ our Emperor, what tribulation and distress of men at that time! The roaring of the sea, the darkening and dimming of the sun, the turning of the moon into blood, the displacement of the stars — did they not foretell in this way the last evils? Indeed, we have seen the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place,

rounding off meretricious and petty speeches and other things which were moving definitely, if not altogether, contrariwise to those things deemed by Christians as holy and ennobling the word of faith.

Such then, to make a long story short, were the outrageous crimes committed by the Western armies against the inheritance of Christ. Without showing any feelings of humanity whatsoever, they exacted from all their money and chattel, dwellings and clothing, leaving to them nothing of all their goods. Thus behaved the brazen neck, the haughty spirit, the high brow, the ever-shaved and youthful cheek, the blood-thirsty right hand, the wrathful nostril, the disdainful eye, the insatiable jaw, the hateful heart, the piercing and running speech practically dancing over the lips. More to blame were the learned and wise among men, they who were faithful to their oaths, who loved the truth and hated evil, who were both more pious and just and scrupulous in keeping the commandments of Christ than we "Greeks."<sup>9</sup> Even more culpable were those who had raised the cross to their shoulders, who had time and again sworn by it and the sayings of the Lord to cross over Christian lands without bloodletting, neither turning aside to the right nor inclining to the left, and to take up arms against the Saracens and to stain red their swords in their blood; they who had sacked Jerusalem, and had taken an oath not to marry or to have sexual intercourse with women as long as they carried the cross on their shoulders, and who were consecrated to God and commissioned to follow in his footsteps.

In truth, they were exposed as frauds. Seeking to avenge the Holy Sepulcher,<sup>10</sup> they raged openly against Christ and sinned by overturning the Cross with the cross they bore on their backs, not even shuddering to trample on it for the sake of a little gold and silver. By grasping pearls, they rejected Christ, the pearl of great price, scattering among the most accursed of brutes the

<sup>9</sup>A sarcastic reference to Western clerics who maintained they were better Christians than these degenerate *Greeks*.

<sup>10</sup>The Tomb of Christ, which is in Jerusalem.

All-Hallowed One. The sons of Ismael<sup>11</sup> did not behave in this way, for when the Latins overpowered Sion<sup>12</sup> the Latins showed no compassion or kindness to their race.<sup>13</sup> Neither did the Ismaelites neigh after Latin women, nor did they turn the cenotaph of Christ<sup>14</sup> into a common burial place of the fallen, nor did they transform the entranceway of the life-bringing tomb into a passageway leading down into Hades, nor did they replace the Resurrection with the Fall. Rather, they allowed everyone to depart in exchange for the payment of a few gold coins; they

took only the ransom money and left to the people all their possessions, even though these numbered more than the grains of sand. Thus the enemies of Christ dealt magnanimously with the Latin infidels, inflicting upon them neither sword, nor fire, nor hunger, nor persecution, nor nakedness, nor bruises, nor constraints.<sup>15</sup> How differently, as we have briefly recounted, the Latins treated us who love Christ and are their fellow believers, guiltless of any wrong against them.

<sup>11</sup>Muslims. Arabs claim descent from Abraham (Ibrahim) through his son Ishmael (Ismail).

<sup>12</sup>Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup>The army of the First Crusade captured Jerusalem in a blood bath in July 1099.

<sup>14</sup>A cenotaph is a monument. This is a reference to the crusader Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, which

stands over the presumed sites where Jesus was crucified, buried, and arose from the dead.

<sup>15</sup>Nicetas contrasts Saladin's treatment of the defeated Latins, after he captured Jerusalem in October 1187, with the crusaders' actions at Jerusalem in July 1099 and in Constantinople.

## The Fourth Crusade from a Western Perspective



### ▼ Gunther of Pairis, *A CONSTANTINOPOLITAN HISTORY*

One of the participants in the April 1204 looting of Constantinople was Martin, abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Pairis, which was located in the Vosges Mountains of German-speaking Alsace. Upon his return to Pairis in 1205, Martin commissioned one of the monastery's brothers, Gunther, to compose an account of the abbot's adventures on the crusade. Gunther (ca. 1150?–after 1210?), already an accomplished scholar and poet, took this opportunity to construct the *Hystoria Constantinopolitana* (*A Constantinopolitan History*), a literary masterpiece written to reveal the ways of God to humanity.

The following three selections come from chapters 1, 19, and 22 of his twenty-five-chapter history. In the first Gunther sets the tone and theme of his work; in the second he recounts his abbot's exploits as Martin participates in the plundering of the city; in the third he tells of an incident in the crusader port of Acre to which Abbot Martin had sailed after his adventures in Constantinople.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Gunther was a master writer who deliberately employed irony throughout the *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*. How did he employ irony in Chapter 19? Be specific and thorough in identifying all uses of this device.

2. Consider this irony now in the light of Chapters 1 and 22. What seems to be the message, therefore, of Chapter 19?
3. Compose Nicetas Choniates's commentary on these three chapters.

## CHAPTER 1

All manifestations of divine power excite such intensive wonder that unextraordinary phenomena should not be judged divine. Still, we are particularly in the habit of marveling at those great and difficult deeds which that divine power deigns to display through simple persons — persons who humbly in their own sight are the least of humanity and are deemed unequal to such tasks by others. For this reason, it is more marvelous that the people of the children of Israel were delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh and out of the iron furnace of Egyptian slavery through Moses, a humble man who, holding no office, tended the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro, than if this people had been freed through some very powerful king in mighty battle and by thousands of soldiers. . . . Certainly, the less God's works are joined to human ability, the more the majesty of divine power shines forth within them.

For this reason, it seemed acceptable for me to relate . . . certain truly great and difficult deeds that the Lord has deigned to effect in our time through a certain rather modest and humble man to the praise and glory of His name, the pious memory of this particular man,<sup>1</sup> the perpetual felicity of our present place,<sup>2</sup> and, most assuredly, the honor and delight of the entire German people or, more truly and importantly, for the consolation and protection of the whole Western Church. The pages of this story of ours will contain absolutely nothing false or doubtful. Rather, they will adhere to the true and strict sequence of events, just as this man, about whom we are about to say much, rather humbly and bashfully narrated the pure and simple story to us. We do not dare write about the praise and commendation of which this man is worthy lest

he, who attributes everything to God and seeks to ascribe nothing to himself, be offended by his praises. Nevertheless, neither will we be able to keep entirely silent altogether, lest we do a clear injustice to God, the author of all these deeds, who is accustomed to exalt His humble people. Therefore we will be careful to balance our pen between the two, so that the mighty works of God, which were accomplished through him, might not lie concealed, and so that this man might remain undisturbed in his humility.

Therefore, whoever is inspired to pick up this, our little book, or to read it, let him also zealously bring sagacity and diligence of mind to the things treated herein, which are meant to be minutely examined. For he will find here momentous, well-known events which would never have taken place or happened without divine direction. We also want the reader to be forewarned that even if things done by our own people appear impious, he must not doubt that they were, nevertheless, effected by the Divine Will, which is always and everywhere just.

## CHAPTER 19

While the victors were rapidly plundering the conquered city, which they had made their own by right of battle, Abbot Martin began to think also about his own booty and, lest he remain empty-handed while everyone else got rich, he resolved to use his own consecrated hands for pillage. But because he thought it improper to touch secular spoils with those same hands, he began to plan how he might scrape together for himself some portion of those relics of the saints, which he knew to be in great quantity there.

Accordingly, foreseeing something grand, he took along with him one of his two chaplains

<sup>1</sup>Abbot Martin, who was still alive in 1205 when Gunther wrote these words.

<sup>2</sup>Pairis, which was enriched by the relics that Martin brought home.



and headed for a certain church which was greatly venerated because the mother of the extremely famous Emperor Emmanuel had her splendid tomb there.<sup>3</sup> Although this seemed to be significant to the Greeks, our people considered it inconsequential. A large hoard of money from the entire surrounding countryside was stored there and also precious relics, which, in the vain hope of security, the Greeks had brought to the same spot from neighboring churches and monasteries. Before the city was stormed this fact had also been told to our people by those whom the Greeks had expelled. Since many pilgrims were simultaneously breaking into this church and others were greedily occupied with other matters, such as stealing gold, silver, and every sort of precious article, Martin, thinking it improper to commit sacrilege except in a holy cause, sought out a more remote spot, where the very sanctity of the place seemed to promise that it was possible to find there those objects he so greatly desired.

There he found a certain old man, handsome of face and with a long white beard — definitely a priest, but quite different in appearance from our priests,<sup>4</sup> and for this reason the abbot thought him a layman. With an inward calmness yet in a truly terrifying voice, Martin thundered violently: "Come, faithless old man, show me the more powerful of the relics you guard. Otherwise, understand that you will be punished immediately with death." The old man was truly terrified by the shouting rather than by the words, inasmuch as he heard the former but could not understand the latter. Knowing that Martin could not communicate in the Greek tongue, the old man began to speak in the Roman language,<sup>5</sup> which he had learned to an extent, in order to

appease the man with flattery and mollify his anger (which really did not exist). In reply, the abbot was barely able to force out a few words of the same language, in order to communicate to the old man what he demanded of him. Then, examining Martin's face and dress and thinking it more tolerable that a man of religion violate<sup>6</sup> the holy relics in awe and reverence, rather than that worldly men should pollute them, possibly, with bloodstained hands, the old man opened for Martin an iron chest and showed him the desired treasure, which Abbot Martin judged pleasing and more desirable to him than all the riches of Greece. On seeing it, the abbot hurriedly and greedily thrust in both hands, and, as he was girded for action, both he and the chaplain filled the folds of their habits with sacred sacrilege. He wisely concealed those relics which seemed to him the most powerful and left at once. What those relics are that the holy robber appropriated for himself, and how worthy they are of veneration, is set forth more appropriately at the end of this little work.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, as he was hurrying back toward the ships, so overstuffed, so to speak, those who had come to know and love him saw him from the ships, even as they were hurrying toward the pillage. They light-heartedly asked whether he had looted anything or with what articles he was so loaded down. He, as always was the case, said with smiling countenance and merry words: "We have done well." To which they replied: "Thanks be to God."<sup>8</sup>

## CHAPTER 22

I should like to interject certain things at this point in our narrative. Even if everything else

<sup>3</sup>The abbey church of Christ *Pantokrator* (ruler of the World).

<sup>4</sup>Western priests did not wear beards; Eastern priests did.

<sup>5</sup>Probably an Italian dialect used for the purpose of trade with Italian merchants in Constantinople.

<sup>6</sup>The Latin verb that he uses, *contrectaret*, has a number of odious connotations, such as "dishonor," "touch illicitly," "have sexual intercourse with," and "steal," and Gunther, a brilliant wordsmith, always chose his words carefully.

<sup>7</sup>The relics included a trace of Christ's blood; a piece of the

Holy Cross; a piece of the body of Saint John the Baptist; the arm of Saint James the Apostle; the foot of Saint Cosmas; numerous assorted body parts of other saints; and bits and pieces of various sacred places and artifacts, such as a piece of stone from the site where Christ fasted and a piece of wood from the table of the Last Supper.

<sup>8</sup>With this phrase, *Deo gratias*, the Mass normally is brought to an end.

were false, they would adequately prove that the things effected through Abbot Martin — both those deeds which we have already narrated and those which still remain to be told — received direction from the font of Divine Providence. Specifically, on the third night before Martin began his return voyage home, a certain cleric with whom he was quite friendly, Aegidius by name, a native of Bohemia . . . who intended to return in the same ship with the abbot — indeed not while sleeping but while wide-awake — saw very clearly (as he vehemently asserted) two angels at the very spot where the sacred relics were stored. This was also the place where he and the abbot had sleeping quarters (the abbot, of course, in order to guard the sacred articles closely). Aegidius, however, was totally ignorant of what was stored there. These angels were seen in the vicinity of the chest in which God's holy gifts were hidden, engaged in a service of wondrous devotion, praising with every reverence God, who had bestowed these articles on His servant. More-

over, when that service of divine veneration ended, with one encouraging the other, they determinedly called upon God to place under His protection that very man to whom He had given such goods, along with all who were attached to him.

Anyway, when morning came and Aegidius related this indisputable vision to the abbot, suddenly in the midst of his words he burst into tears from the great stirring within his heart, and he said: "I do not know who you might be, where you have come from, or what you are guarding in that chest of yours. What I do know for certain, however, is that the hand of God is with you. For this reason I ought not leave the company of Your Holiness during this voyage, since I believe most certainly that I could not possibly be in any jeopardy while aboard the ship on which you are traveling." The abbot was struck by the miracle of this man's holy vision, especially considering the faith of the man, whom he had come to perceive as devout and truthful.

# The Battle for Tenochtitlán: An Aztec Perspective



## ▼ Bernardino de Sahagún, GENERAL HISTORY OF THE THINGS OF NEW SPAIN

Bernardino de Sahagún (ca. 1499–1590), a member of the Franciscan Order, was one of the earliest Spanish missionaries in Mexico, arriving in 1529. He soon developed a keen interest in the culture of the natives of Mexico, for whom he had deep affection and respect. He mastered the *Nahuatl* language, spoken by the Aztecs and other central Mexican peoples, and in 1545 began a systematic collection of oral and pictorial information about the culture of the native Mexicans. The result was his *General History of the Things of New Spain*, our principal source of information about Mexican culture at the time of the Spanish conquest. Many Spaniards opposed his work because they believed his efforts to preserve the memory of native culture threatened their policy of exploiting and Christianizing the Amerindians. As a result, in 1578 his writings and notes were confiscated by royal decree and sent back to Spain, where they gathered dust in an archive until discovered and published in the nineteenth century.

The following selection comes from the twelfth and last book of the *General History*. Based on interviews Sahagún and his Amerindian assistants had with Aztecs who had experienced the conquest some twenty-five years earlier, Book Twelve, which exists in both Nahuatl and Spanish versions, recounts the conquest of Mexico from the time Cortés arrived on the Mexican coast in April 1519 until the days following the Aztecs' capitulation in August 1521. Although scholars hotly debate the exact role of Sahagún and his assistants in composing and organizing Book Twelve, most agree that it accurately portrays Aztec views and perceptions of the events that unfolded between 1519 and 1521.

Our excerpt, translated from the Nahuatl text, picks up the story in November 1519. By then the Spaniards had gained as allies the Tlaxcalans, the Aztecs' bitter enemies, and were leaving Cholula, an ancient city that the Spaniards and their allies had sacked because of its leaders' lack of cooperation. They were on their way to Tenochtitlán, the splendid Aztec capital on Lake Texcoco, for an anticipated meeting with the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does the source reveal about the motives of the Spaniards and their allies for their attack on the Aztecs?
2. What was Moctezuma's strategy to deal with the Spaniards? Why did it fail?
3. What impression did Spanish firearms and cannons have on the Aztecs? What evidence is there that the Aztecs adjusted their strategy to counter the Spanish weapons?



4. Aside from their firearms, what other military advantages did the Spaniards have over their opponents? How decisive do these other advantages seem to have been?
5. On several occasions the Aztecs routed the Spaniards. What explains these Aztec victories?
6. How did the Aztec view of war differ from that of the Spaniards?
7. What does the source reveal about Aztec religious beliefs, values, and practices?

And after the dying in Cholula, the Spaniards set off on their way to Mexico,<sup>1</sup> coming gathered and bunched, raising dust. . . .

Thereupon Moteuczoma<sup>2</sup> named and sent noblemen and a great many other agents of his . . . to go meet [Cortés] . . . at Quauhtechcac. They gave [the Spaniards] golden banners of precious feathers, and golden necklaces.

And when they had given the things to them, they seemed to smile, to rejoice and to be very happy. Like monkeys they grabbed the gold. It was as though their hearts were put to rest, brightened, freshened. For gold was what they greatly thirsted for; they were gluttonous for it, starved for it, piggishly wanting it. They came lifting up the golden banners, waving them from side to side, showing them to each other. They seemed to babble; what they said to each other was in a babbling tongue. . . .

Another group of messengers — rainmakers, witches, and priests — had also gone out for an encounter, but nowhere were they able to do anything or to get sight of [the Spaniards]; they did not hit their target, they did not find the people they were looking for, they were not sufficient. . . .

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▷ Cortés and his entourage continue their march.

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Then they set out in this direction, about to enter Mexico here. Then they all dressed and equipped themselves for war. They girded themselves, tying their battle gear tightly on themselves and then on their horses. Then they arranged themselves in rows, files, ranks.

Four horsemen came ahead going first, staying ahead, leading. . . .

Also the dogs, their dogs, came ahead, sniffing at things and constantly panting.<sup>3</sup>

By himself came marching ahead, all alone, the one who bore the standard on his shoulder. He came waving it about, making it spin, tossing it here and there. . . .

Following him came those with iron swords. Their iron swords came bare and gleaming. On their shoulders they bore their shields, of wood or leather.

The second contingent and file were horses carrying people, each with his cotton cuirass,<sup>4</sup> his leather shield, his iron lance, and his iron sword hanging down from the horse's neck. They came with bells on, jingling or rattling. The horses, the deer,<sup>5</sup> neighed, there was much neighing, and they would sweat a great deal; water seemed to fall from them. And their flecks of foam splatted on the ground, like soapsuds splatting. . . .

The third file were those with iron crossbows, the crossbowmen. Their quivers went hanging

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout the text, the term *Mexico* refers to Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec Empire. *Mexica* refers to the people of Tenochtitlán and Tlatelolco, a large suburb of Tenochtitlán.

<sup>2</sup>One of several acceptable modern spellings of the Aztec emperor's name, including *Moctezuma*, *Moteczuma*, and *Montezuma*.

<sup>3</sup>Specially bred war dogs for use in combat.

<sup>4</sup>A piece of armor that covered the body from neck to waist.

<sup>5</sup>Having never before seen horses, some Aztecs considered them to be large deer.

at their sides, passed under their armpits, well filled, packed with arrows, with iron bolts. . . .

The fourth file were likewise horsemen; their outfits were the same as has been said.

The fifth group were those with *harquebuses*,<sup>6</sup> the *harquebusiers*, shouldering their *harquebuses*; some held them [level]. And when they went into the great palace, the residence of the ruler, they repeatedly shot off their *harquebuses*. They exploded, sputtered, discharged, thundered, disgorged. Smoke spread, it grew dark with smoke, everyplace filled with smoke. The fetid smell made people dizzy and faint.

Then all those from the various *altepetl*<sup>7</sup> on the other side of the mountains, the *Tlaxcalans*, the people of *Tliluhquitepec*, of *Huexotzinco*, came following behind. They came outfitted for war with their cotton upper armor, shields, and bows, their quivers full and packed with feathered arrows, some barbed, some blunted, some with obsidian<sup>8</sup> points. They went crouching, hitting their mouths with their hands yelling, singing, . . . whistling, shaking their heads. . . .

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- ▷ Cortés and his army entered Tenochtitlán in November 1519 and were amicably received by Moctezuma, who was nonetheless taken captive by the Spaniards. Cortés's army was allowed to remain in a palace compound, but tensions grew the following spring. Pedro de Alvarado, in command while Cortés left to deal with a threat to his authority from the governor of Cuba, became increasingly concerned for the Spaniards' safety as the people of Tenochtitlán prepared to celebrate the annual festival in honor of *Huitzilopochtli*, the warrior god of the sun.
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And when it had dawned and was already the day of his festivity, very early in the morning those who had made vows to him<sup>9</sup> unveiled his

face. Forming a single row before him they offered him incense; each in his place laid down before him offerings of food for fasting and rolled amaranth<sup>10</sup> dough. And it was as though all the youthful warriors had gathered together and had hit on the idea of holding and observing the festivity in order to show the Spaniards something, to make them marvel and instruct them.<sup>11</sup> . . .

When things were already going on, when the festivity was being observed and there was dancing and singing, with voices raised in song, the singing was like the noise of waves breaking against the rocks.

When it was time, when the moment had come for the Spaniards to do the killing, they came out equipped for battle. They came and closed off each of the places where people went in and out. . . . And when they had closed these exits, they stationed themselves in each, and no one could come out any more. . . . Then they surrounded those who were dancing, going among the cylindrical drums. They struck a drummer's arms; both of his hands were severed. Then they struck his neck; his head landed far away. Then they stabbed everyone with iron lances and struck them with iron swords. They struck some in the belly, and then their entrails came spilling out. They split open the heads of some, they really cut their skulls to pieces, their skulls were cut up into little bits. And if someone still tried to run it was useless; he just dragged his intestines along. There was a stench as if of sulfur. Those who tried to escape could go nowhere. When anyone tried to go out, at the entryways they struck and stabbed him.

And when it became known what was happening, everyone cried out, "Mexica warriors, come running, get outfitted with devices, shields, and arrows, hurry, come running, the warriors

<sup>6</sup>A heavy matchlock gun.

<sup>7</sup>The Nahuatl term for any sovereign state, especially the local ethnic states of central Mexico.

<sup>8</sup>A volcanic glass that can be sharpened to a razor-sharp edge.

<sup>9</sup>*Huitzilopochtli*. As god of the sun, he needed daily sacrifices of human hearts and blood in order to rise from the east each morning.

<sup>10</sup>An image of the god was fashioned from amaranth seed flour and the blood of recently sacrificed victims.

<sup>11</sup>An integral part of the ceremony was the singing of hymns that extolled battle, blood, and honor on the field of conflict.

are dying; they have died, perished, been annihilated, O Mexica warriors!" Thereupon there were war cries, shouting, and beating of hands against lips. The warriors quickly came outfitted, bunched together, carrying arrows and shields. Then the fighting began; they shot at them with barbed darts, spears, and tridents, and they hurled darts with broad obsidian points at them. . . .

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- ▷ The fighting that ensued drove the Spaniards and their allies back to the palace enclave. Without a reliable supply of food and water, in July 1520, Cortés, who had returned with his power intact, led his followers on a desperate nocturnal escape from the city, but they were discovered and suffered heavy losses as they fled. They retreated to the other side of the lake, and the Aztecs believed the Spanish threat had passed.
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Before the Spanish appeared to us, first an epidemic broke out, a sickness of pustules.<sup>12</sup> . . . Large bumps spread on people; some were entirely covered. They spread everywhere, on the face, the head, the chest, etc. The disease brought great desolation; a great many died of it. They could no longer walk about, but lay in their dwellings and sleeping places, no longer able to move or stir. They were unable to change position, to stretch out on their sides or face down, or raise their heads. And when they made a motion, they called out loudly. The pustules that covered people caused great desolation; very many people died of them, and many just starved to death; starvation reigned, and no one took care of others any longer.

On some people, the pustules appeared only far apart, and they did not suffer greatly, nor did many of them die of it. But many people's faces were spoiled by it, their faces and noses were made rough. Some lost an eye or were blinded.

This disease of pustules lasted a full sixty days; after sixty days it abated and ended. When people

were convalescing and reviving, the pustules disease began to move in the direction of Chalco.<sup>13</sup> And many were disabled or paralyzed by it, but they were not disabled forever. . . . The Mexica warriors were greatly weakened by it.

And when things were in this state, the Spaniards came, moving toward us from Tetzco. . . .

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- ▷ Having resupplied his Spanish/Tlaxcalan army and having constructed a dozen cannon-carrying brigantines for use on the lake, Cortés resumed his offensive late in 1520. In April 1521 he reached Tenochtitlán and placed the city under a blockade.
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When their twelve boats had come from Tetzco, at first they were all assembled at Acachinanco, and then the Marqués<sup>14</sup> moved to Acachinanco. He went about searching where the boats could enter, where the canals were straight, whether they were deep or not, so that they would not be grounded somewhere. But the canals were winding and bent back and forth, and they could not get them in. They did get two boats in; they forced them down the road coming straight from Xoloco. . . .

And the two boats came gradually, keeping on one side. On the other side no boats came, because there were houses there. They came ahead, fighting as they came; there were deaths on both sides, and on both sides captives were taken. When the Tenochca who lived in Çoquipan saw this, they fled, fled in fear. . . . They took nothing at all with them, they just left all their poor property in fear, they just scattered everything in their haste. And our enemies<sup>15</sup> went snatching things up, taking whatever they came upon. Whatever they hit on they carried away, whether cloaks, lengths of cotton cloth, warrior's devices, log drums, or cylindrical drums.

The Tlatelolca fought in Çoquipan, in war boats. And in Xoloco the Spaniards came to a

<sup>12</sup>Smallpox.

<sup>13</sup>A city on the southeast corner of Lake Texcoco.

<sup>14</sup>Cortés.

<sup>15</sup>The various Amerindian allies of the Spaniards.



place where there was a wall in the middle of the road, blocking it. They fired the big guns at it. At the first shot it did not give way, but the second time it began to crumble. The third time, at last parts of it fell to the ground, and the fourth time finally the wall went to the ground once and for all. . . .

Once they got two of their boats into the canal at Xocotitlan. When they had beached them, then they went looking into the house sites of the people of Xocotitlan. But Tzilacatzin and some other warriors who saw the Spaniards immediately came out to face them; they came running after them, throwing stones at them, and they scattered the Spaniards into the water. . . .

When they got to Tlilhuacan, the warriors crouched far down and hid themselves, hugging the ground, waiting for the war cry, when there would be shouting and cries of encouragement. When the cry went up, "O Mexica, up and at them!" the Tlappanecatli Ecatzin, a warrior of Otomi<sup>16</sup> rank, faced the Spaniards and threw himself at them, saying, "O Tlatelolca warriors, up and at them, who are these barbarians? Come running!" Then he went and threw a Spaniard down, knocking him to the ground; the one he threw down was the one who came first, who came leading them. And when he had thrown him down, he dragged the Spaniard off.

And at this point they let loose with all the warriors who had been crouching there; they came out and chased the Spaniards in the pasageways, and when the Spaniards saw it they, the Mexica, seemed to be intoxicated. Then captives were taken. Many Tlaxcalans, and people of Acolhuacan, Chalco, Xochimilco, etc.,<sup>17</sup> were captured. A great abundance were captured and killed. . . .

Then they took the captives to Yacacolco, hurrying them along, going along herding their captives together. Some went weeping, some

singing, some went shouting while hitting their hands against their mouths. When they got them to Yacacolco, they lined them all up. Each one went to the altar platform where the sacrifice was performed.<sup>18</sup> The Spaniards went first, going in the lead; the people of the different altepetl just followed, coming last. And when the sacrifice was over, they strung the Spaniards' heads on poles on skull racks; they also strung up the horses' heads. They placed them below, and the Spaniards' heads were above them, strung up facing east.<sup>19</sup> . . .

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▷ Despite this victory, the Aztecs could not overcome the problems of shortages of food, water, and warriors. In mid July 1521 the Spaniards and their allies resumed their assault, and in early August the Aztecs decided to send into battle a quetzal-owl warrior, whose success or failure, it was believed, would reveal if the gods wished the Aztecs to continue the war.

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And all the common people suffered greatly. There was famine; many died of hunger. They no longer drank good, pure water, but the water they drank was salty. Many people died of it, and because of it many got dysentery and died. Everything was eaten: lizards, swallows, maize straw, grass that grows on salt flats. And they chewed at . . . wood, glue flowers, plaster, leather, and deerskin, which they roasted, baked, and toasted so that they could eat them, and they ground up medicinal herbs and adobe bricks. There had never been the like of such suffering. The siege was frightening, and great numbers died of hunger. And bit by bit they came pressing us back against the wall, herding us together. . . . There was no place to go; people shoved, pressed and trampled one another; many died in the press. But one woman came to very close quarters with our enemies, throwing water

<sup>16</sup>Elite warriors bound by oath never to retreat.

<sup>17</sup>Amerindian allies of the Spaniards.

<sup>18</sup>Traditionally the sacrifice consisted of cutting the heart out of the victim.

<sup>19</sup>The direction of the god Huitzilopochtli. See note 9.

at them, throwing water in their faces, making it stream down their faces.

And when the ruler Quauhtemotzin<sup>20</sup> and the warriors Coyohuehuetzin, Temilotzin, Topantemotzin, the Mixcoatlailotlac Ahuelitotzin, Tlacotzin, and Petlauhtzin took a great warrior named Tlapaltecatl opochtzin . . . and outfitted him, dressing him in a quetzal-owl costume.<sup>21</sup> . . . "Let him wear it, let him die in it. Let him dazzle people with it, let him show them something; let our enemies see and admire it." When they put it on him he looked very frightening and splendid. And they ordered four [others] to come helping him, to accompany him. They gave him the darts of the devil,<sup>22</sup> darts of wooden rods with flint tips. And the reason they did this was that it was as though the fate of the rulers of the Mexica were being determined.

When our enemies saw him, it was as though a mountain had fallen. Every one of the Spaniards was frightened; he intimidated them, they seemed to respect him a great deal. Then the

quetzal-owl climbed up on the roof. But when some of our enemies had taken a good look at him they rose and turned him back, pursuing him. Then the quetzal-owl turned them again and pursued them. Then he snatched up the precious feathers and gold and dropped down off the roof. He did not die, and our enemies did not carry him off. Also three of our enemies were captured. At that the war stopped for good. There was silence, nothing more happened. Then our enemies went away. It was silent and nothing more happened until it got dark.

And the next day nothing more happened at all, no one made a sound. The common people just lay collapsed. The Spaniards did nothing more either, but lay still, looking at the people. Nothing was going on, they just lay still. . . .

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- ▷ Two weeks passed before the Aztecs capitulated on August 13, 1521, after a siege of over three months' duration.
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<sup>20</sup>Quauhtemotzin was now the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma having died while in Spanish captivity.

<sup>21</sup>This rare bird had been sacred to the Maya and was equally

sacred to the Aztecs. Its four iridescent blue-green tail feathers were highly prized.

<sup>22</sup>Battle darts sacred to Huitzilopochtli.





## An African Voice of Ambivalence?



### ▼ *Nzinga Mbemba (Afonso I),* *LETTERS TO THE KING OF PORTUGAL*

The largest state in central West Africa by 1500 was the kingdom of Kongo, stretching along the estuary of the Congo River in territory that today lies within the nations of Angola and Zaire. In 1483 the Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão made contact with Kongo and several years later visited its inland capital. When he sailed home he brought with him Kongo emissaries, whom King Nzinga a Kuwu dispatched to Lisbon to learn European ways. They returned in 1491, accompanied by Portuguese priests, artisans, and soldiers, who brought with them a wide variety of European goods, including a printing press. In the same year, the king and his son, Nzinga Mbemba, were baptized into the Catholic faith.

Around 1506 Nzinga Mbemba, whose Christian name was *Afonso*, succeeded his father and ruled until about 1543. Afonso promoted the introduction of European culture into his kingdom by adopting Christianity as the state religion (although most of his subjects, especially those in the hinterlands, remained followers of the ancient ways), imitating the etiquette of the Portuguese royal court, and using Portuguese as the language of state business. His son Henrique was educated in Portugal and returned to serve as West Africa's first native-born Roman Catholic bishop. European firearms, horses, and cattle, as well as new foods from the Americas, became common in Kongo, and Afonso dreamed of achieving a powerful and prosperous state through cooperation with the Europeans. By the time of his death, however, his kingdom was on the verge of disintegration, in no small measure because of the Portuguese. As many later African rulers were to discover, the introduction of European products and customs caused dissension and instability. Worse yet, Portuguese involvement in the slave trade undermined Afonso's authority and made his subjects restive.

In 1526 King Afonso wrote the following three letters to King João III of Portugal. The three documents are part of a collection of twenty-four letters that Afonso and his Portuguese-educated native secretaries dispatched to two succes-

sive kings of Portugal on a variety of issues. This collection is our earliest extant source of African commentary on the European impact.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to King Afonso, what have been the detrimental effects of the Portuguese presence in his kingdom?
2. What do the letters reveal about the mechanics of the slave trade in the kingdom? Who participated in it?
3. What do the letters reveal about King Afonso's attitude toward slavery? Was he opposed to the practice in its entirety or only certain aspects of it?
4. What steps has the king taken to deal with the problems caused by the Portuguese? What do the letters suggest about the effectiveness of these steps?
5. How would you characterize Afonso's attitude toward the power and authority of the king of Portugal? Does he consider himself inferior to the Portuguese king or his equal?
6. Based on this evidence, what do you conclude was King Afonso's conception of the ideal relationship between the Portuguese and his kingdom?

### JULY 6, 1526

Sir, Your Highness should know how our Kingdom is being lost in so many ways that it is convenient to provide for the necessary remedy, since this is caused by the excessive freedom given by your agents and officials to the men and merchants who are allowed to come to this Kingdom to set up shops with goods and many things which have been prohibited by us, and which they spread throughout our Kingdoms and Domains in such an abundance that many of our vassals, whom we had in obedience, do not comply because they have the things in greater abundance than we ourselves; and it was with these things that we had them content and subjected under our vassalage and jurisdiction, so it is doing a great harm not only to the service of God, but the security and peace of our Kingdoms and State as well.

And we cannot reckon how great the damage is, since the mentioned merchants are taking

every day our natives, sons of the land and the sons of our noblemen and vassals and our relatives, because the thieves and men of bad conscience grab them wishing to have the things and wares of this Kingdom which they are ambitious of; they grab them and get them to be sold; and so great, Sir, is the corruption and licentiousness that our country is being completely depopulated, and Your Highness should not agree with this nor accept it as in your service. And to avoid it we need from those (your) Kingdoms no more than some priests and a few people to teach in schools, and no other goods except wine and flour for the holy sacrament. That is why we beg of Your Highness to help and assist us in this matter, commanding your factors that they should not send here either merchants or wares, because it is *our will that in these Kingdoms there should not be any trade of slaves nor outlet for them.*<sup>1</sup> Concerning what is referred [to] above, again we beg of Your Highness to agree with it, since otherwise we cannot remedy such an obvi-

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<sup>1</sup>The emphasis appears in the original letter.

ous damage. Pray Our Lord in His mercy to have Your Highness under His guard and let you do forever the things of His service. I kiss your hands many times.

*At our town of Kongo, written on the sixth day of July, João Teixeira did it in 1526.*

*The King. Dom<sup>3</sup> Affonso.*

*{On the back of this letter the following can be read:*

*To the most powerful and excellent prince Dom João, King our Brother.}*

## UNDATED

Moreover, Sir, in our Kingdoms there is another great inconvenience which is of little service to God, and this is that many of our people, keenly desirous as they are of the wares and things of your Kingdoms, which are brought here by your people, and in order to satisfy their voracious appetite, seize many of our people, freed and exempt men, and very often it happens that they kidnap even noblemen and the sons of noblemen, and our relatives, and take them to be sold to the white men who are in our Kingdoms; and for this purpose they have concealed them; and others are brought during the night so that they might not be recognized.

And as soon as they are taken by the white men they are immediately ironed and branded with fire, and when they are carried to be embarked, if they are caught by our guards' men the whites allege that they have bought them but they cannot say from whom, so that it is our duty to do justice and to restore to the freemen their freedom, but it cannot be done if your subjects feel offended, as they claim to be.

And to avoid such a great evil we passed a law so that any white man living in our Kingdoms and wanting to purchase goods in any way should first inform three of our noblemen and officials

of our court whom we rely upon in this matter, and these are Dom Pedro Manipanza and Dom Manuel Manissaba, our chief usher, and Gonçalo Pires our chief freighter, who should investigate if the mentioned goods are captives<sup>4</sup> or free men, and if cleared by them there will be no further doubt nor embargo for them to be taken and embarked. But if the white men do not comply with it they will lose the aforementioned goods. And if we do them this favor and concession it is for the part Your Highness has in it, since we know that it is in your service too that these goods are taken from our Kingdom, otherwise we should not consent to this. . . .

## OCTOBER 18, 1526

Sir, Your Highness has been kind enough to write to us saying that we should ask in our letters for anything we need, and that we shall be provided with everything, and as the peace and the health of our Kingdom depend on us, and as there are among us old folks and people who have lived for many days, it happens that we have continuously many and different diseases which put us very often in such a weakness that we reach almost the last extreme; and the same happens to our children, relatives and natives owing to the lack in this country of physicians and surgeons who might know how to cure properly such diseases. And as we have got neither dispensaries nor drugs which might help us in this forlornness, many of those who had been already confirmed and instructed in the holy faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ perish and die; and the rest of the people in their majority cure themselves with herbs and breads and other ancient methods, so that they put all their faith in the mentioned herbs and ceremonies if they live, and believe that they are saved if they die; and this is not much in the service of God.

<sup>2</sup>That is, wrote the letter. João Teixeira was probably a Kongo-born secretary who had been baptized and educated by Portuguese missionaries.

<sup>3</sup>Portuguese for "lord."

<sup>4</sup>Captives taken by King Afonso in his wars of expansion (made possible by Portuguese firearms) were sold into slavery.



And to avoid such a great error and inconvenience, since it is from God in the first place and then from your Kingdoms and from Your Highness that all the good and drugs and medicines have come to save us, we beg of you to be agreeable and kind enough to send us two physicians and two apothecaries and one surgeon, so that they may come with their drugstores and all the necessary things to stay in our kingdoms, be-

cause we are in extreme need of them all and each of them. We shall do them all good and shall benefit them by all means, since they are sent by Your Highness, whom we thank for your work in their coming. We beg of Your Highness as a great favor to do this for us, because besides being good in itself it is in the service of God as we have said above.

## Science and the Claims of Religion



### ▼ *Galileo Galilei,* *LETTER TO THE* *GRAND DUCHESS CHRISTINA*

The greatest European scientist in the early 1600s was the Italian physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). His most important work was in mechanics, in which he developed the theory of inertia and described the laws that dictate the movement of falling bodies. In astronomy he pioneered the use of the telescope and defended the theory of a sun-centered universe, advanced by the Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus in 1543. His public support of Copernicus disturbed Catholic clergymen and theologians, who were convinced it threatened correct belief and the authority of the Church.

In 1615 Galileo, a devout Catholic, defended his approach to science in a published letter addressed to Christina, the grand duchess of Tuscany. In the short run Galileo lost his case. The Church officially condemned Copernican theory in 1616 and forced Galileo to renounce many of his ideas in 1632. His works continued to be read, however, and in the long run his writings contributed to the acceptance of Copernican theory and the new methodology of science.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does Galileo characterize the motives of his enemies? Why in his view do they use religious arguments against him?
2. According to Galileo, why is it dangerous to apply passages of scripture to science?
3. To Galileo, how does nature differ from the Bible as a source of truth?
4. In Galileo's view, what is the proper relationship between science and religion?

Some years ago, as Your Serene Highness well knows, I discovered in the heavens many things that had not been seen before our own age. The novelty of these things, as well as some consequences which followed from them in contradiction to the physical notions commonly held among academic philosophers, stirred up against me no small number of professors — as if I had placed these things in the sky with my own hands in order to upset nature and overturn the sciences. They seemed to forget that the increase of known truths stimulates the investigation, establishment, and growth of the arts; not their diminution or destruction.

Showing a greater fondness for their own opinions than for truth, they sought to deny and disprove the new things which, if they had cared to look for themselves, their own senses would have demonstrated to them. To this end they hurled various charges and published numerous writings filled with vain arguments, and they made the grave mistake of sprinkling these with passages taken from places in the Bible which they had failed to understand properly, and which were ill suited to their purposes.

Persisting in their original resolve to destroy me and everything mine by any means they can think of, these men are aware of my views in astronomy and philosophy. They know that as to the arrangement of the parts of the universe, I hold the sun to be situated motionless in the center of the revolution of the celestial orbs while the earth rotates on its axis and revolves about the sun. They know also that I support this position not only by refuting the arguments of Ptolemy<sup>1</sup> and Aristotle, but by producing many counter-arguments; in particular, some which relate to physical effects whose causes can perhaps be assigned in no other way. In addition there are astronomical arguments derived from

many things in my new celestial discoveries that plainly confute the Ptolemaic system while admirably agreeing with and confirming the contrary hypothesis. Possibly because they are disturbed by the known truth of other propositions of mine which differ from those commonly held, and therefore mistrusting their defense so long as they confine themselves to the field of philosophy, these men have resolved to fabricate a shield for their fallacies out of the mantle of pretended religion and the authority of the Bible. These they apply, with little judgment, to the refutation of arguments that they do not understand and have not even listened to.

First they have endeavored to spread the opinion that such propositions in general are contrary to the Bible and are consequently damnable and heretical. . . . Next, becoming bolder, and hoping (though vainly) that this seed which first took root in their hypocritical minds would send out branches and ascend to heaven, they began scattering rumors among the people that before long this doctrine would be condemned by the supreme authority.<sup>2</sup> They know, too, that official condemnation would not only suppress the two propositions which I have mentioned, but would render damnable all other astronomical and physical statements and observations that have any necessary relation or connection with these. . . .

To this end they make a shield of their hypocritical zeal for religion. They go about invoking the Bible, which they would have minister to their deceitful purposes. Contrary to the sense of the Bible and the intention of the holy Fathers, if I am not mistaken, they would extend such authorities until even in purely physical matters — where faith is not involved — they would have us altogether abandon reason and the evidence of our senses in favor of some biblical

<sup>1</sup>Ptolemy (ca. 100 to 170 C.E.) spent most of his life in Alexandria, Egypt, and was the Greek astronomer who propounded key aspects of the geocentric planetary system that prevailed in Europe until the time of Copernicus.

<sup>2</sup>The pope.



passage, though under the surface meaning of its words this passage may contain a different sense.

I hope to show that I proceed with much greater piety than they do, when I argue not against condemning this book, but against condemning it in the way they suggest — that is, without understanding it, weighing it, or so much as reading it. . . .

The reason produced for condemning the opinion that the earth moves and the sun stands still is that in many places in the Bible one may read that the sun moves and the earth stands still. Since the Bible cannot err, it follows as a necessary consequence that anyone takes an erroneous and heretical position who maintains that the sun is inherently motionless and the earth movable.

With regard to this argument, I think in the first place that it is very pious to say and prudent to affirm that the holy Bible can never speak untruth — whenever its true meaning is understood. But I believe nobody will deny that it is often very abstruse, and may say things which are quite different from what its bare words signify. Hence in expounding the Bible if one were always to confine oneself to the unadorned grammatical meaning, one might fall into error. Not only contradictions and propositions far from true might thus be made to appear in the Bible, but even grave heresies and follies. Thus it would be necessary to assign to God feet, hands, and eyes, as well as corporeal and human affections, such as anger, repentance, hatred, and sometimes even

the forgetting of things past and ignorance of those to come. These propositions uttered by the Holy Ghost were set down in that manner by the sacred scribes<sup>3</sup> in order to accommodate them to the capacities of the common people, who are rude and unlearned. . . .

This being granted, I think that in discussions of physical problems we ought to begin not from the authority of scriptural passages but from sense-experiences and necessary demonstrations; for the holy Bible and the phenomena of nature proceed alike from the divine Word, the former as the dictate of the Holy Ghost and the latter as the observant executrix of God's commands. It is necessary for the Bible, in order to be accommodated to the understanding of every man, to speak many things which appear to differ from the absolute truth so far as the bare meaning of the words is concerned. But Nature, on the other hand, is inexorable and immutable; she never transgresses the laws imposed upon her, or cares a whit whether her abstruse reasons and methods of operation are understandable to men. For that reason it appears that nothing physical which sense-experience sets before our eyes, or which necessary demonstrations prove to us, ought to be called in question (much less condemned) upon the testimony of biblical passages which may have some different meaning beneath their words. For the Bible is not chained in every expression to conditions as strict as those which govern all physical effects; nor is God any less excellently revealed in Nature's actions than in the sacred statements of the Bible.

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<sup>3</sup>The Holy Ghost is the third divine person of the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost), who sanctifies and inspires humankind. Christians believe the authors of the Bible wrote under the sacred and infallible inspiration of the Holy Ghost.



## Luther's Views of Christianity and Society



### ▼ *Martin Luther, TABLE TALK*

The Protestant Reformation had many voices, but its first prophet was Martin Luther (1483–1546), whose Ninety-Five Theses initiated the momentous anti-Catholic rebellion in 1517. Born into the family of a German miner and educated at the University of Erfurt, the young Luther was preparing for a career as a lawyer when suddenly in 1505 he abandoned his plans and became an Augustinian friar. Luther's decision resulted from dissatisfaction over his relationship with God and doubts about his personal salvation. He hoped that life as an Augustinian would protect him from temptation and give him the opportunity to win God's favor by devoting himself to prayer, study, and the sacraments. His spiritual anxieties soon returned, however. Overwhelmed by his perceived inadequacies and failings, he became convinced that he could never "earn" his salvation by living up to the high standards of selflessness, charity, and purity required by



Jesus of his followers. Certain he could never satisfy an angry, judging God, he was terrorized by the prospect of eternal damnation.

During the 1510s, however, while teaching theology at the University of Wittenberg, Luther found spiritual peace through his reflections on the scriptures, especially Paul's letter to the Romans. He concluded that human beings, burdened as they were by weakness and sin, could never *earn* salvation by leading blameless lives and performing in the proper spirit the pious acts enjoined by the Catholic Church. Rather, salvation was an unmerited divine gift, resulting from God-implanted faith in Jesus, especially the redemptive power of His death and resurrection. This fundamental Protestant doctrine of *justification by faith alone* inspired Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, in which he attacked Catholic teaching on indulgences, by which people could atone for their sins and ensure their own and loved ones' salvation by contributing money to the Church. Within five years Luther was the recognized leader of a religious movement — Protestantism — that broke with the Catholic Church over the question of salvation and a host of other issues concerning Christianity and the Christian life.

As the Reformation spread from Germany to other parts of Europe, leadership of Protestantism passed to younger people such as John Calvin in Geneva and John Knox in Scotland. Luther remained at Wittenberg, and as pastor and professor wrote hundreds of sermons and treatises in defense of his religious vision. He and his wife, Katharina, a former nun, made their home in the Augustinian convent in Wittenberg where Luther had lived as a friar. Here they raised a family and entertained scores of religious leaders and students with whom the talkative Luther loved to discourse on the issues of the day. From 1522 to 1546 some of these guests recorded Luther's most notable sayings as they remembered them, and from their journals we have what is known as Luther's *Tischreden*, or *Table Talk*.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Luther, what is the importance of the Bible in a Christian's life? How in his view had the Roman Catholic Church obscured the meaning and message of the Bible?
2. How does Luther define faith? Why is it superior to external acts of devotion?
3. What are Luther's objections to the pope and other officials of the Catholic Church?
4. How does Luther view marriage, in particular women's role in marriage?
5. What perspective does Luther have on the Turkish threat to European society? How is his perspective affected by his religious beliefs?

## SALVATION

Because as the everlasting, merciful God, through his Word<sup>1</sup> and Sacraments,<sup>2</sup> talks and deals with us, all other creatures excluded, not of temporal things which pertain to this vanishing life, and which in the beginning he provided richly for us, but as to where we shall go when we depart from here, and gives unto us his Son for a Savior, delivering us from sin and death, and purchasing for us everlasting righteousness, life, and salvation, therefore it is most certain, that we do not die away like the beasts that have no understanding; but so many of us . . . shall through him be raised again to life everlasting at the last day, and the ungodly to everlasting destruction.

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## FAITH VERSUS GOOD WORKS

He that goes from the gospel to the law,<sup>3</sup> thinking to be saved by good works,<sup>4</sup> falls as uneasily as he who falls from the true service of God to idolatry; for, without Christ, all is idolatry and fictitious imaginings of God, whether of the Turkish Qur'an, of the pope's decrees, or Moses' laws; if a man think thereby to be justified and saved before God, he is undone.

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The gospel preaches nothing of the merit of works; he that says the gospel requires works for salvation, I say, flat and plain, is a liar.

Nothing that is properly good proceeds out of the works of the law, unless grace be present; for what we are forced to do, goes not from the heart, nor is acceptable.

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A Capuchin<sup>5</sup> says: wear a grey coat and a hood, a rope round thy body, and sandals on thy feet. A Cordelier says: put on a black hood; an ordinary papist says: do this or that work, hear mass, pray, fast, give alms, etc. But a true Christian says: I am justified and saved only by faith in Christ, without any works or merits of my own; compare these together, and judge which is the true righteousness.

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I have often been resolved to live uprightly, and to lead a true godly life, and to set everything aside that would hinder this, but it was far from being put in execution; even as it was with Peter,<sup>6</sup> when he swore he would lay down his life for Christ.

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I will not lie or dissemble before my God, but will freely confess, I am not able to effect that good which I intend, but await the happy hour when God shall be pleased to meet me with his grace.

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A Christian's worshiping is not the external, hypocritical mask that our friars wear, when they

<sup>1</sup>The Word is God's message, especially as revealed through Jesus' life.

<sup>2</sup>Sacraments are rites that are outward visible signs of an inward spiritual grace. Of the seven Catholic sacraments, Luther retained two: baptism and the eucharist.

<sup>3</sup>By law Luther meant religious rules and regulations; he believed that futile human efforts to live strictly according to the dictates of the law undermined true faith.

<sup>4</sup>All the ceremonies and pious activities such as pilgrimages, relic veneration, and attendance at Mass that the Catholic Church promoted as vehicles of God's grace and eternal salvation.

<sup>5</sup>The Capuchins and Cordeliers were both branches of the Franciscan order noted for their austerity and strict poverty. A distinctive feature of the Capuchins' dress was their peaked hood, or *capuche*.

<sup>6</sup>One of Jesus' twelve apostles; following Jesus' arrest by Roman soldiers before his crucifixion, Peter three times denied any relationship with Jesus, despite having vowed shortly before to lay down his life for his teacher. Eventually, Peter died a martyr in Rome.

chastise their bodies, torment and make themselves faint, with ostentatious fasting, watching, singing, wearing hair shirts, scourging themselves, etc. Such worshiping God does not desire.

## THE BIBLE

Great is the strength of the divine Word. In the epistle to the Hebrews,<sup>7</sup> it is called "a two-edged sword." But we have neglected and scorned the pure and clear Word, and have drunk not of the fresh and cool spring; we are gone from the clear fountain to the foul puddle, and drunk its filthy water; that is, we have sedulously read old writers and teachers, who went about with speculative reasonings, like the monks and friars.

The ungodly papists prefer the authority of the church far above God's Word; a blasphemy abominable and not to be endured; void of all shame and piety, they spit in God's face. Truly, God's patience is exceeding great, in that they are not destroyed; but so it always has been.

## THE PAPACY AND THE CLERGY

How does it happen that the popes pretend that they form the Church, when, all the while, they are bitter enemies of the Church, and have no knowledge, certainly no comprehension, of the holy gospel? Pope, cardinals, bishops, not a soul of them has read the Bible; it is a book unknown to them. They are a pack of guzzling, gluttonous wretches, rich, wallowing in wealth and laziness, resting secure in their power, and never, for a moment, thinking of accomplishing God's will.

Kings and princes coin money only out of metals, but the pope coins money out of everything

— indulgences, ceremonies, dispensations, pardons; all fish come to his net. . . .

A gentleman being at the point of death, a monk from the next convent came to see what he could pick up, and said to the gentleman: Sir, will you give so and so to our monastery? The dying man, unable to speak, replied by a nod of the head, whereupon the monk, turning to the gentleman's son, said: You see, your father makes us this bequest. The son said to the father: Sir, is it your pleasure that I kick this monk down the stairs? The dying man nodded as before, and the son immediately drove the monk out of doors.

The papists took the invocation of saints from the pagans, who divided God into numberless images and idols, and ordained to each its particular office and work. . . .

The invocation of saints is a most abominable blindness and heresy; yet the papists will not give it up. The pope's greatest profit arises from the dead; for the calling on dead saints brings him infinite sums of money and riches, far more than he gets from the living. . . .

In Popedom they make priests, not to preach and teach God's Word, but only to celebrate mass, and to roam about with the sacrament. For, when a bishop ordains a man, he says: Take the power to celebrate mass, and to offer it for the living and the dead. But we ordain priests according to the command of Christ and St. Paul, namely, to preach the pure gospel and God's Word. The papists in their ordinations make no mention of preaching and teaching God's Word, therefore their consecrating and ordaining is false and wrong, for all worshiping which is not ordained

<sup>7</sup>Paul's Letter to the Hebrews, a part of the Christian Bible, or New Testament.



of God, or erected by God's Word and command, is worthless, yea, mere idolatry.

## THE REFORM OF THE CHURCH

The pope and his crew can in no way endure the idea of reformation; the mere word creates more alarm at Rome than thunderbolts from heaven or the day of judgment. A cardinal said the other day: Let them eat, and drink, and do what they will; but as to reforming us, we think that is a vain idea; we will not endure it. Neither will we Protestants be satisfied, though they administer the sacrament in both kinds, and permit priests to marry;<sup>8</sup> we will also have the doctrine of the faith pure and unfalsified, and the righteousness that justifies and saves before God, and which expels and drives away all idolatry and false-worshiping; with these gone and banished, the foundation on which Popedom is built also falls.

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The chief cause that I fell out with the pope was this: the pope boasted that he was the head of the church, and condemned all that would not be under his power and authority; . . . Further, he took upon him power, rule, and authority over the Christian church, and over the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God; no man must presume to expound the Scriptures, but only he, and according to his ridiculous conceits; this was not to be endured. They who, against God's word, boast of the church's authority, are mere idiots.

## MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY

Who can sufficiently admire the state of conjugal union, which God has instituted and founded, and from which all human creatures, indeed, all states proceed. Where would we be if it did not exist? But neither God's ordinance, nor the gra-

cious presence of children, the fruit of matrimony, moves the ungodly world, which sees only the temporal difficulties and troubles of matrimony, but sees not the great treasure that is hidden in it. We were all born of women — emperors, kings, princes, yea, Christ himself, the Son of God, did not disdain to be born of a virgin. Let the scoffers and rejecters of matrimony go hang, . . . and the papists, who reject married life, and yet have mistresses; if they need to scoff at matrimony, let them be consistent, and keep no concubines.

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Marrying cannot be without women, nor can the world subsist without them. To marry is medicine against unchastity. A woman is, or at least should be, a friendly, courteous, and merry companion in life; this is why they are named house-honors, the honor and ornament of the house, and inclined to tenderness; for this reason are they chiefly created, to bear children, and be the pleasure, joy, and solace of their husbands.

## THE TURKISH THREAT

The 21st of December, 1536, George, marquis of Brandenburg came to Wittenberg, and announced that the Turks had obtained a great victory over the Germans,<sup>9</sup> whose fine army had been betrayed and massacred; he said that many princes and brave captains had perished, and that such Christians as remained prisoners, had been treated with extreme cruelty, their noses being slit, and themselves used most scornfully. Luther said: We, Germans, must consider hereupon that God's anger is at our gates, that we should hasten to repentance while there is yet time. . . .

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<sup>8</sup>Two of the many changes that Protestants demanded were allowing all Christians to receive the sacrament of the eucharist in the forms of bread and wine (in medieval Roman Catholic practice, only the priest drank the eucharistic wine)

and allowing priests to marry. The principle behind both changes was Luther's teaching that all Christians are priests — that is, responsible for their own religious faith.

<sup>9</sup>It is unclear what battle the marquis is describing.

Luther complained of the emperor Charles's<sup>10</sup> negligence, who, taken up with other wars, suffered the Turk to capture one place after another. It is with the Turks as previously it was with the Romans, every subject is a soldier, as long as he is able to bear arms, so they have always a disciplined army ready for the field; whereas we gather

together ephemeral bodies of vagabonds, untried wretches, upon whom is no dependence. My fear is, that the papists will unite with the Turks to exterminate us.<sup>11</sup> Please God, may my anticipation not come true, but certain it is, that the desperate creatures will do their best to deliver us over to the Turks.

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<sup>10</sup>Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, also known as Charles I as king of Spain, a devout Roman Catholic.

<sup>11</sup>The German Lutherans.





## The Uncivilized Have Been Justly Conquered



▼ *Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda,*  
*DEMOCRATES SECUNDUS, OR*  
*THE JUST CAUSES OF WAR*  
*AGAINST THE INDIANS*

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda was born in 1490 into a Spanish aristocratic family and studied ancient literature and philosophy at the University of Alcalá in Spain. With ambitions for a scholarly career, he moved to Italy, the center of Renaissance Aristotelianism, where he studied and taught for twenty years. He later served as chaplain and official historian for King Charles I of Spain and later for his son, Philip II. Although best known for his commentaries on Aristotle, Sepúlveda also wrote a number of original philosophical and theological works. His view that superior peoples had the right to enslave inferiors was an elaboration of an argument found in Aristotle. He first expounded his theory in 1547 in his *Democrates Secundus, or the Just Causes of War against the Indians*, a dialogue between fictitious Democrates, who expresses the author's views, and Leopoldo, who serves as his foil. The arguments he advanced in 1550 against Las Casas were based on this work. Sepúlveda died in 1573, embittered by the controversies that had clouded his old age.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does Sepúlveda justify the enslavement of inferior peoples by their superiors?
2. For Sepúlveda, what qualities of the Spaniards make them superior?
3. How does he "prove" the inferiority of the Indians?
4. What is there about the fate of the Aztecs that reinforces Sepúlveda's general views of the Indians?
5. If, for the sake of argument, one were to accept Sepúlveda's premises concerning the Indians' inferiority, would one be forced to accept his conclusions?
6. What might the judges at Valladolid have found convincing in Sepúlveda's arguments? What weaknesses might they have discerned?

It is established then, in accordance with the authority of the most eminent thinkers, that the dominion of prudent, good, and humane men over those of contrary disposition is just and natural. Nothing else justified the legitimate empire of the Romans over other peoples, according to the testimony of St. Thomas<sup>1</sup> in his work on the rule of the prince. St. Thomas here followed St. Augustine, who, in referring to the empire of the Romans in the fifth book of *The City of God*, wrote: "God conceded to the Romans a very extensive and glorious empire in order to keep grave evils from spreading among many peoples who, in search of glory, coveted riches and many other vices." In other words God gave the Romans their empire so that, with the good legislation that they instituted and the virtue in which they excelled, they might change the customs and suppress and correct the vices of many barbarian peoples. . . .

Turning then to our topic, whether it is proper and just that those who are superior and who excel in nature, customs, and laws rule over their inferiors, you can easily understand . . . if you are familiar with the character and moral code of the two peoples, that it is with perfect right that the Spaniards exercise their dominion over those barbarians of the New World and its adjacent islands. For in prudence, talent, and every kind of virtue and human sentiment they are as inferior to the Spaniards as children are to adults, or women to men, or the cruel and inhumane to the very gentle, or the excessively intemperate to the continent and moderate.

But I do not think that you expect me to speak of the prudence and talent of the Spaniards, for you have, I think, read Lucan, Silius Italicus, the

two Senecas, and among later figures St. Isidore, who is inferior to none in theology, and Averroës and Avempace who are excellent in philosophy, and in astronomy King Alfonso,<sup>2</sup> not to mention others whom it would take too long to enumerate. And who is ignorant of the Spaniards' other virtues: courage, humanity, justice, and religion? I refer simply to the princes and to those whose aid and skill they utilize to govern the state, to those, in short, who have received a liberal education. And what shall I say of their moderation in rejecting gluttony and lasciviousness, inasmuch as no nation or very few nations of Europe can compare with the frugality and sobriety of the Spaniards? I admit that I have observed in these most recent times that through contact with foreigners luxury has invaded the tables of our nobles. Still, since this is reproved by good men among the people, it is to be hoped that in a short while they may return to the traditional and innate sobriety of our native custom.

As for the Christian religion, I have witnessed many clear proofs of the firm roots it has in the hearts of Spaniards, even those dedicated to the military. The best proof of all has seemed to me to be the fact that in the great plague that followed the sack of Rome, in the Pontificate of Clement VII, not a single Spaniard among those who died in the epidemic failed to request in his will that all the goods stolen from the citizens be restored to them.<sup>3</sup> And I, who was following the army and was in the city observing it all diligently, was a witness to it. . . . What shall I say of the Spanish soldiers' gentleness and humanitarian sentiments? Their only and greatest solicitude and care in the battles, after the winning

<sup>1</sup>The theologian St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) was a member of the Dominican religious order; his views were accepted as authoritative by the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was a convert to Christianity whose discussions of salvation, the Church, human nature, and the sacraments exerted enormous influence on Christian thought.

<sup>2</sup>All eight of these men were born in Spain. Lucan (65–39 B.C.E.) and Silius Italicus (100–26 B.C.E.) were poets; Seneca the Elder (55 B.C.E.–39 C.E.) wrote a book on Roman

rhetericians; Seneca the Younger (4 B.C.E.–65 C.E.) was a statesman, philosopher, and tragedian; Isidore of Seville (560–636) was a historian and theologian; Averroës (1126–1198) and Avempace (d. 1138) were Spanish Muslim philosophers; and King Alfonso X (1221–1284) was a famous patron of learning and literature.

<sup>3</sup>The Sack of Rome occurred in 1527 during the Italian Wars (1494–1559) when troops loyal to Emperor Charles V (as king of Spain, Charles I), frustrated over back pay owed them, went on a protracted rampage.

of the victory, is to save the greatest possible number of vanquished and free them from the cruelty of their allies. Now compare these qualities of prudence, skill, magnanimity, moderation, humanity, and religion with those of those little men of America in whom one can scarcely find any remnants of humanity. They not only lack culture but do not even use or know about writing or preserve records of their history — save for some obscure memory of certain deeds contained in painting. They lack written laws and their institutions and customs are barbaric. And as for their virtues, if you wish to be informed of their moderation and mildness, what can be expected of men committed to all kinds of passion and nefarious lewdness and of whom not a few are given to the eating of human flesh. Do not believe that their life before the coming of the Spaniards was one of Saturnine<sup>4</sup> peace, of the kind that poets sang about. On the contrary, they made war with each other almost continuously, and with such fury that they considered a victory to be empty if they could not satisfy their prodigious hunger with the flesh of their enemies. This form of cruelty is especially prodigious among these people, remote as they are from the invincible ferocity of the Scythians,<sup>5</sup> who also ate human bodies. But in other respects they are so cowardly and timid that they can scarcely offer any resistance to the hostile presence of our side, and many times thousands and thousands of them have been dispersed and have fled like women on being defeated by a small Spanish force scarcely amounting to one hundred.

So as not to detain you longer in this matter, consider the nature of those people in one single instance and example, that of the Mexicans, who are regarded as the most prudent and courageous.<sup>6</sup> Their king was Moctezuma, whose empire extended the length and breadth of those regions and who inhabited the city of Mexico, a

city situated in a vast lake, and a very well defended city both on account of the nature of its location and on account of its fortifications. . . . Informed of the arrival of Cortés and of his victories and his intention to go to Mexico under pretext of a conference, Moctezuma sought all possible means to divert him from his plan. Failing in this, terrorized and filled with fear, he received him in the city with about three hundred Spaniards. Cortés for his part, after taking possession of the city, held the people's cowardliness, ineptitude, and rudeness in such contempt that he not only compelled the king and his principal subjects, through terror, to receive the yoke and rule of the king of Spain, but also imprisoned King Moctezuma himself, because of his suspicion that a plot was on foot to kill some Spaniards in a certain province. This he could do because of the stupor and inertia of the people, who were indifferent to the situation and preoccupied with other things than the taking up of arms to liberate their king. . . . Could there be a better or clearer testimony of the superiority that some men have over others in talent, skill, strength of spirit, and virtue? Is it not proof that they are slaves by nature? For the fact that some of them appear to have a talent for certain manual tasks is no argument for their greater human prudence. We see that certain insects, such as the bees and the spiders, produce works that no human skill can imitate. And as for the civil life of the inhabitants of New Spain and the province of Mexico, I have already said that the people are considered to be the most civilized of all. They themselves boast of their public institutions as if it were not a sufficient proof of their industry and civilization that they have rationally constructed cities, and kings appointed by popular suffrage rather than by hereditary right and age, and a commerce like that of civilized people. But see how they deceive themselves and how differ-

<sup>4</sup>Refers to the idea of a golden age.

<sup>5</sup>Originally from central Asia, the Scythians were nomads who moved into southern Russia in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. Ancient Greek and Roman historians described them as wild and cruel savages.

<sup>6</sup>On the capitulation of the Aztecs to Cortés, see source 16).



ent is my opinion from theirs, since for me the foremost proof of the rudeness and barbarism and innate servitude of those people lies precisely in their public institutions, nearly all of which are servile and barbarous. They do have houses, and some rational mode of common life, and such commerce as natural necessity demands, but what does this prove other than that they are not bears or monkeys completely lacking in reason?

I have made reference to the customs and character of the barbarians. What shall I say now of the impious religion and wicked sacrifices of such people, who, in venerating the devil as if he were God, believed that the best sacrifice that they could placate him with was to offer him human hearts?<sup>7</sup> . . . Opening up the human breasts they pulled out the hearts and offered them on their heinous altars. And believing that they had made a ritual sacrifice with which to placate their gods, they themselves are the flesh of the victims. These are crimes that are considered by the philoso-

phers to be among the most ferocious and abominable perversions, exceeding all human iniquity. . . .

How can we doubt that these people — so uncivilized, so barbaric, contaminated with so many impieties and obscenities — have been justly conquered by a nation excellent in every kind of virtue, with the best law and best benefit for the barbarians? Prior to the arrival of the Christians they had the nature, customs, religion, and practice of evil sacrifice as we have explained. Now, on receiving with our rule our writing, laws, and morality, imbued with the Christian religion, having shown themselves to be docile to the missionaries that we have sent them, as many have done, they are as different from their primitive condition as civilized people are from barbarians, or as those with sight from the blind, as the inhuman from the meek, as the pious from the impious, or to put it in a single phrase, in effect, as men from beasts.

<sup>7</sup>Huitzilopochtli, a sun and war god, was worshipped daily with offerings of blood and hearts torn from the bodies of sacrificed victims.

## “They Are Our Brothers”



### ▼ *Bartolomé de Las Casas,* *IN DEFENSE OF THE INDIANS*

Bartolomé de Las Casas was born into the family of a Spanish merchant in 1474. After abandoning his academic studies for a career of soldiering, he embarked for Hispaniola in 1502 in the entourage of the new governor of the island, Nicolas de Ovando. Las Casas received grants of land from the governor and participated in the conquest of Cuba between 1511 and 1515. In 1515 he renounced his property and rights in the Americas and returned to Spain, where he began to lobby Spanish officials on behalf of the Amerindians. In 1519, with royal approval, he established a cooperative Spanish-Amerindian farming community in Venezuela, but it generated little enthusiasm and the experiment failed. He then joined the Dominican religious order and continued to write and work on behalf of the American Indians while living in Spanish America and traveling regularly back to Spain. His denunciations of alleged Spanish cruelties so struck the conscience of Charles I that the king arranged the debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda in 1550. After the debate Las Casas remained in Spain, where he died in 1566.



The following selection is an excerpt from Las Casas's response to Sepúlveda at the Valladolid debate. Given the title *In Defense of the Indians*, it existed in several Latin manuscript copies but was not published until the twentieth century.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why, according to Las Casas, is it significant that the Indians established effective governments?
2. What is Las Casas's definition of *barbarian*? How does it differ from Sepúlveda's definition?
3. How do Las Casas's historical arguments and views of the Spaniards differ from those of Sepúlveda?
4. What, according to Las Casas, are the implications of Sepúlveda's arguments for international relations?
5. The judges could not decide a winner in the debate. What might explain this?
6. Put yourself in the place of one of the Valladolid judges and write an explanation of why you chose Las Casas or Sepúlveda as the winner of the debate.

However, he admits, and proves, that the barbarians he deals with . . . have a lawful, just, and natural government. Even though they lack the art and use of writing, they are not wanting in the capacity and skill to rule and govern themselves, both publicly and privately. Thus they have kingdoms, communities, and cities that they govern wisely according to their laws and customs. Thus their government is legitimate and natural, even though it has some resemblance to tyranny. From these statements we have no choice but to conclude that the rulers of such nations enjoy the use of reason and that their people and the inhabitants of their provinces do not lack peace and justice. Otherwise they could not be established or preserved as political entities for long. This is made clear by the Philosopher and Augustine.<sup>1</sup> Therefore not all barbarians are irrational or natural slaves or unfit for government. Some barbarians, then, in accord with justice and nature, have kingdoms, royal digni-

ties, jurisdiction, and good laws, and there is among them lawful government.

Now if we shall have shown that among our Indians of the western and southern shores (granting that we call them barbarians and that they are barbarians) there are important kingdoms, large numbers of people who live settled lives in a society, great cities, kings, judges and laws, persons who engage in commerce, buying, selling, lending, and the other contracts of the law of nations, will it not stand proved that the Reverend Doctor Sepúlveda has spoken wrongly and viciously against peoples like these, either out of malice or ignorance of Aristotle's teaching, and, therefore, has falsely and perhaps irreparably slandered them before the entire world? From the fact that the Indians are barbarians it does not necessarily follow that they are incapable of government and have to be ruled by others, except to be taught about the Catholic faith and to be admitted to the holy sacraments.

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<sup>1</sup>The term *Philosopher* refers to Aristotle; on *Augustine*, see source 4, footnote 1.

They are not ignorant, inhuman, or bestial. Rather, long before they had heard the word Spaniard they had properly organized states, wisely ordered by excellent laws, religion, and custom. They cultivated friendship and, bound together in common fellowship, lived in populous cities in which they wisely administered the affairs of both peace and war justly and equitably, truly governed by laws that at very many points surpass ours, and could have won the admiration of the sages of Athens, as I will show in the second part of this *Defense*.

Now if they are to be subjugated by war because they are ignorant of polished literature, let Sepúlveda hear Trogus Pompey:<sup>2</sup>

Nor could the Spaniards submit to the yoke of a conquered province until Caesar Augustus, after he had conquered the world, turned his victorious armies against them and organized that barbaric and wild people as a province, once he had led them by law to a more civilized way of life.

Now see how he called the Spanish people barbaric and wild. I would like to hear Sepúlveda, in his cleverness, answer this question: Does he think that the war of the Romans against the Spanish was justified in order to free them from barbarism? And this question also: Did the Spanish wage an unjust war when they vigorously defended themselves against them?

Next, I call the Spaniards who plunder that unhappy people torturers. Do you think that the Romans, once they had subjugated the wild and barbaric peoples of Spain, could with secure right divide all of you among themselves, handing over so many head of both males and females as allotments to individuals? And do you then conclude

that the Romans could have stripped your rulers of their authority and consigned all of you, after you have been deprived of your liberty, to wretched labors, especially in searching for gold and silver lodes and mining and refining the metals? And if the Romans finally did that, as is evident from Diodorus,<sup>3</sup> [would you not judge] that you also have the right to defend your freedom, indeed your very life, by war? Sepúlveda, would you have permitted Saint James<sup>4</sup> to evangelize your own people of Córdoba in that way? For God's sake and man's faith in him, is this the way to impose the yoke of Christ on Christian men? Is this the way to remove wild barbarism from the minds of barbarians? Is it not, rather, to act like thieves, cut-throats, and cruel plunderers and to drive the gentlest of people headlong into despair? The Indian race is not that barbaric, nor are they dull witted or stupid, but they are easy to teach and very talented in learning all the liberal arts, and very ready to accept, honor, and observe the Christian religion and correct their sins (as experience has taught) once priests have introduced them to the sacred mysteries and taught them the word of God. They have been endowed with excellent conduct, and before the coming of the Spaniards, as we have said, they had political states that were well founded on beneficial laws.

Furthermore, they are so skilled in every mechanical art that with every right they should be set ahead of all the nations of the known world on this score, so very beautiful in their skill and artistry are the things this people produces in the grace of its architecture, its painting, and its needlework. . . .

In the liberal arts that they have been taught up to now, such as grammar and logic, they are

<sup>2</sup>A Roman historian of the first century B.C.E.; only fragments of his ambitious history of Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, Gaul, and Spain survive.

<sup>3</sup>A Greek historian of the first century B.C.E.

<sup>4</sup>James, son of Zebedee, was one of the original twelve apostles, or closest followers of Jesus, and suffered martyrdom for his faith in 43 C.E. According to legend, his body

was carried to Spain, where, as St. James "the Moor-Slayer," he became the patron saint of the Christian Reconquest of the Iberian peninsula from Islam. The church of Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, believed to be the site of his relics, became one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations in all of Europe from the late ninth century onward.

remarkably adept. With every kind of music they charm the ears of their audience with wonderful sweetness. They write skillfully and quite elegantly, so that most often we are at a loss to know whether the characters are handwritten or printed. . . .

From this it is clear that the basis for Sepúlveda's teaching that these people are uncivilized and ignorant is worse than false. Yet even if we were to grant that this race has no keenness of mind or artistic ability, certainly they are not, in consequence, obliged to submit themselves to those who are more intelligent and to adopt their ways, so that, if they refuse, they may be subdued by having war waged against them and be enslaved, as happens today. . . . We are bound by the natural law to embrace virtue and imitate the uprightness of good men. . . .

Therefore, not even a truly wise man may force an ignorant barbarian to submit to him, especially by yielding his liberty, without doing him an injustice. This the poor Indians suffer, with extreme injustice, against all the laws of God and of men and against the law of nature itself. For evil must not be done that good may come of it, for example, if someone were to castrate another against his will. For although eunuchs are freed from the lust that drives human minds forward in its mad rush, yet he who castrates another is most severely punished. . . .

Now if, on the basis of this utterly absurd argument, war against the Indians were lawful, one nation might rise up against another and one man against another man, and on the pretext of superior wisdom, might strive to bring the other into subjection. On this basis the Turks, and the Moors — the truly barbaric scum of the nations — with complete right and in accord with the law of nature could carry on war, which, as it seems to some, is permitted to us by a lawful decree of the state. If we admit this, will not

everything high and low, divine and human, be thrown into confusion? What can be proposed more contrary to the eternal law than what Sepúlveda often declares? What plague deserves more to be loathed? . . .

Hence every nation, no matter how barbaric, has the right to defend itself against a more civilized one that wants to conquer it and take away its freedom. And, moreover, it can lawfully punish with death the more civilized as a savage and cruel aggressor against the law of nature. And this war is certainly more just than the one that, under pretext of wisdom, is waged against them. . . .

Again, if we want to be sons of Christ and followers of the truth of the gospel, we should consider that, even though these peoples may be completely barbaric, they are nevertheless created in God's image. They are not so forsaken by divine providence that they are incapable of attaining Christ's kingdom. They are our brothers, redeemed by Christ's most precious blood, no less than the wisest and most learned men in the whole world. Finally, we must consider it possible that some of them are predestined to become renowned and glorious in Christ's kingdom. Consequently, to these men who are wild and ignorant in their barbarism we owe the right which is theirs, that is, brotherly kindness and Christian love, according to Paul: "I owe a duty to Greeks just as much as to barbarians, to the educated just as much as to the uneducated, and it is this that makes me want to bring the Good News to you too in Rome."<sup>5</sup> Christ wanted love to be called his single commandment. This we owe to all men. Nobody is excepted. "There is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>From Paul's Letter to the Romans, 1:14, 15.

<sup>6</sup>From Paul's Letter to the Colossians, 3:17.





## The Beginnings of Sikhism in India



▼ *Nanak,*

### *SACRED HYMNS FROM THE ADI-GRANTH*

The Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) was not the only person in sixteenth-century India who dreamed of combining elements of Hinduism and Islam into a new religious faith. Such a process was going on during his reign and resulted in the founding of Sikhism, a religion that now has approximately ten million followers, mostly in the northwest Indian state of East Punjab. The founder of Sikhism and its first guru, or teacher, was Nanak, who lived from 1469 to 1539. Born into a Hindu family in modern Pakistan, Nanak as a young man sought out the teaching of Muslim and Hindu mystics and holy men. At the age of thirty he began to wander through India searching for disciples who would accept his message of love and reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims. He taught that external religious acts such as bathing in the sacred Ganges River or making a pilgrimage to Mecca are worthless before God unless inward sincerity and true morality accompany them. As a strict and uncompromising monotheist, he declared that love of God alone is sufficient to free any person of any caste from the law of Karma, bringing an end to the cycle of reincarnation and resulting in the absorption into the One.

The following poems come from the holy book of Sikhism, known as the *Adi-Granth*, or *Granth Sahib*. Compiled by Arjan (1563–1606), the fifth guru, it con-

sists mostly of hymns and poetry composed by Nanak and other early gurus. It attained its final form in 1705–1706, when the tenth and last guru, Gobind Singh (1666–1708), added a number of hymns and declared that from then on the *Adi-Granth* itself, not any individual, was Sikhism's true guru. The following excerpts are taken from poems of Nanak.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What Muslim elements can be found in Nanak's message? What Hindu elements? What Hindu and Muslim practices does he reject?
2. Which religion, Hinduism or Islam, seems to have had the stronger impact on Nanak's religious views?
3. Once Sikhism was established, Hindu and Muslim authorities persecuted it. Why would the Sikhs' religion constitute such a serious threat to both Muslim and Hindu societies?
4. What parallels can you discover between Nanak's message and Martin Luther's (Chapter 1, source 1)? What differences?

There is one God,  
Eternal Truth is His Name;  
Maker of all things,  
Fearing nothing and at enmity with nothing,  
Timeless is His Image;  
Not begotten, being of His own Being;  
By the grace of the Guru, made known to men.

It is not through thought that He is to be  
comprehended  
Though we strive to grasp Him a hundred  
thousand times;  
Nor by outer silence and long deep meditation  
Can the inner silence be reached;  
Nor is man's hunger for God appeasable  
By piling up world-loads of wealth.  
All the innumerable devices of worldly  
wisdom  
Leave a man disappointed; not one avails.  
How then shall we know the Truth?  
How shall we rend the veils of untruth away?  
Abide thou by His Will, and make thine own,  
His will, O Nanak, that is written in thy  
heart.

He cannot be installed like an idol,  
Nor can man shape His likeness.  
He made Himself and maintains Himself  
On His heights unstained forever;  
Honored are they in His shrine  
Who meditate upon Him.

Those who have inner belief in the Name,  
Always achieve their own liberation,  
Their kith and kin are also saved.  
Guided by the light of the Guru  
The disciple steers safe himself.  
And many more he saves;  
Those enriched with inner belief  
Do not wander begging.  
Such is the power of His stainless Name,  
He who truly believes in it, knows it.

There is no counting men's prayers,  
There is no counting their ways of adoration.  
Thy lovers, O Lord, are numberless;  
Numberless those who read aloud from the  
Vedas,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Basic Hindu texts that originally were sacred books of the Aryans, Sanskrit-speaking invaders from the steppes

of western Asia who by 1500 B.C.E. ruled northwest India.

Numberless those Yogis<sup>2</sup> who are detached  
from the world;

Numberless are Thy Saints contemplating,  
Thy virtues and Thy wisdom;  
Numberless are the benevolent, the lovers of  
their kind.

Numberless Thy heroes and martyrs<sup>3</sup>  
Facing the steel of their enemies;  
Numberless those who in silence  
Fix their deepest thoughts upon Thee;

Pilgrimages, penances, compassion and  
almsgiving  
Bring a little merit, the size of sesame seed.  
But he who hears and believes and loves the  
Name  
Shall bathe and be made clean  
In a place of pilgrimage within him.

When in time, in what age, in what day of the  
month or week  
In what season and in what month did'st Thou  
create the world?

The Pundits<sup>4</sup> do not know or they would have  
written it in the Puranas,<sup>5</sup>  
The Qazis do not know, or they would have  
recorded it in the Qur'an,  
Nor do the Yogis know the moment of the day,  
Nor the day of the month or the week, nor the  
month nor the season.

Only God Who made the world knows when  
He made it.  
The Vedas proclaim Him,  
So do the readers of the Puranas;  
The learned speak of Him in many discourses;  
Brahma<sup>7</sup> and Indra<sup>8</sup> speak of Him,  
Shiva<sup>9</sup> speaks of Him, Siddhas<sup>10</sup> speak of Him,  
The Buddhas<sup>11</sup> He has created, proclaim Him.

Maya, the mythical goddess;<sup>12</sup>  
Sprang from the One, and her womb brought  
forth

Three acceptable disciples of the One:  
Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.  
Brahma, it is said bodies forth the world,  
Vishnu it is who sustains it;  
Shiva the destroyer, who absorbs,  
He controls death and judgment.

God makes them to work as He wills,  
He sees them ever, they see Him not;  
That of all is the greatest wonder.

I have described the realm of *dharma*.  
Now I shall describe the realm of Knowledge;

How many are the winds, the fires, the waters.  
How many are the Krishnas<sup>13</sup> and Shivas,  
How many are the Brahmas fashioning the  
worlds,  
Of many kinds and shapes and colors;  
How many worlds, like our own there are,  
Where action produces the consequences.

. . . How many adepts, Buddhas and Yogis are  
there,  
How many goddesses and how many images of  
the goddesses;  
How many gods and demons and how many  
sages;

How many hidden jewels in how many oceans,  
How many the sources of life;  
How many the modes and diversities of  
speech,

How many are the kings, the rulers and the  
guides of men;  
How many the devoted there are, who pursue  
this divine knowledge.  
His worshipers are numberless, saith Nanak.

<sup>2</sup>Persons with occult powers achieved through discipline of the body.

<sup>3</sup>Muslim warriors.

<sup>4</sup>Brahmins learned in Hindu religion and law.

<sup>5</sup>A collection of popular Hindu books containing stories of the gods.

<sup>6</sup>Muslim judges.

<sup>7</sup>The Hindu creator-god.

<sup>8</sup>The war-god of the Aryans and the embodiment of

strength, courage, and leadership; a prominent figure in the Vedas.

<sup>9</sup>The god of destruction, death, and fertility.

<sup>10</sup>A class of demigods, beings more powerful than mortals but not divine.

<sup>11</sup>Those who have been enlightened.

<sup>12</sup>A Hindu goddess who symbolizes material creation.

<sup>13</sup>The most popular of the god Vishnu's incarnations.





## The Seclusion of Japan



### ▼ *Tokugawa Iemitsu,* *CLOSED COUNTRY EDICT OF 1635*

For close to a century Japan was the most spectacular European success story in Asia. Portuguese traders and missionaries began visiting Japan regularly in the 1540s, and the Spanish, Dutch, and English soon followed. The Japanese were fascinated by European goods such as eyeglasses and clocks and were quick to appreciate the military potential of European firearms and artillery. Some even adopted European dress. Daimyo on the island of Kyushu in southwestern Japan actively competed for European trade by tolerating the activities of Catholic missionaries and in a few cases converting to Christianity themselves. Oda Nobunaga, the military leader who unified approximately half of Japan in the 1570s and 1580s, encouraged the activities of Catholic missionaries in order to weaken his

rivals, the powerful and wealthy Buddhist monasteries. Nobunaga's tolerance of missionary activity led to numerous conversions in the district of Kyoto, Japan's capital city. By the early seventeenth century approximately five hundred thousand Japanese had become Christians.

By then, however, anti-European sentiment was growing. Nobunaga's successor, Hideyoshi, became suspicious of Europeans after the Spaniards conquered the Philippines, and he began to question the loyalty of daimyo who had become Christians. In 1597 he ordered the crucifixion of nine Catholic missionaries and seventeen Japanese converts. The early Tokugawa shoguns, in their single-minded pursuit of stability and order, also feared the subversive potential of Christianity. They quickly moved to obliterate it, even at the expense of isolating Japan and severely limiting commercial contacts with China, Southeast Asia, and Europe.

Japan's isolation policy was fully implemented by Tokugawa Iemitsu, Ieyasu's grandson and shogun from 1623 to 1651. His edicts essentially closed Japan to all foreigners and prevented his subjects from leaving Japan. The following document, the most famous of Iemitsu's exclusion edicts, is directed to the two commissioners of Nagasaki, a port city in southern Japan and a center of Christianity.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What steps are to be taken to suppress Christianity?
2. How are commercial dealings with foreigners to be handled before they are ended altogether?
3. In what ways did the edict affect the shogun's Japanese subjects?
4. Does trade or Christianity seem to have been the greater threat to Japan according to the edict?

1. Japanese ships are strictly forbidden to leave for foreign countries.

2. No Japanese is permitted to go abroad. If there is anyone who attempts to do so secretly, he must be executed. The ship so involved must be impounded and its owner arrested, and the matter must be reported to the higher authority.

3. If any Japanese returns from overseas after residing there, he must be put to death.

4. If there is any place where the teachings of the [Catholic] priests is practiced, the two of you must order a thorough investigation.

5. Any informer revealing the whereabouts of the followers of the priests must be rewarded

accordingly. If anyone reveals the whereabouts of a high ranking priest, he must be given one hundred pieces of silver. For those of lower ranks, depending on the deed, the reward must be set accordingly.

6. If a foreign ship has an objection (to the measures adopted) and it becomes necessary to report the matter to Edo,<sup>1</sup> you may ask the Omura<sup>2</sup> domain to provide ships to guard the foreign ship. . . .

7. If there are any Southern Barbarians<sup>3</sup> who propagate the teachings of the priests, or otherwise commit crimes, they may be incarcerated in the prison. . . .

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<sup>1</sup>Modern Tokyo, the seat of the Tokugawa government.

<sup>2</sup>The area around the city of Nagasaki.

<sup>3</sup>Westerners.

8. All incoming ships must be carefully searched for the followers of the priests.

9. No single trading city shall be permitted to purchase all the merchandise brought by foreign ships.

10. Samurai<sup>4</sup> are not permitted to purchase any goods originating from foreign ships directly from Chinese merchants in Nagasaki.

11. After a list of merchandise brought by foreign ships is sent to Edo, as before you may order that commercial dealings may take place without waiting for a reply from Edo.

12. After settling the price, all white yarns<sup>5</sup> brought by foreign ships shall be allocated to the five trading cities<sup>6</sup> and other quarters as stipulated.

13. After settling the price of white yarns, other merchandise [brought by foreign ships] may be traded freely between the [licensed] dealers. However, in view of the fact that Chinese ships are small and cannot bring large consignments, you may issue orders of sale at your discretion. Additionally, payment for goods pur-

chased must be made within twenty days after the price is set.

14. The date of departure homeward of foreign ships shall not be later than the twentieth day of the ninth month. Any ships arriving in Japan later than usual shall depart within fifty days of their arrival. As to the departure of Chinese ships, you may use your discretion to order their departure after the departure of the Portuguese *galeota*.<sup>7</sup>

15. The goods brought by foreign ships which remained unsold may not be deposited or accepted for deposit.

16. The arrival in Nagasaki of representatives of the five trading cities shall not be later than the fifth day of the seventh month. Anyone arriving later than that date shall lose the quota assigned to his city.

17. Ships arriving in Hirado<sup>8</sup> must sell their raw silk at the price set in Nagasaki, and are not permitted to engage in business transactions until after the price is established in Nagasaki.

<sup>4</sup>Members of Japan's military aristocracy.

<sup>5</sup>Raw silk.

<sup>6</sup>The cities of Kyoto, Edo, Osaka, Sakai, and Nagasaki.

<sup>7</sup>A galleon, an ocean-going Portuguese ship.

<sup>8</sup>A small island in southwest Japan, not far from Nagasaki.





## An Affirmation of Human Progress



▼ *Marquis de Condorcet,*  
*SKETCH OF THE PROGRESS*  
*OF THE HUMAN MIND*

Throughout history most human beings have valued tradition and resisted change. Reform of governments, religious institutions, and social relationships was deemed possible, but it typically did not mean going forward to institute something new but going back to recapture features of a lost golden age. Serious thinkers who studied the past and contemplated the future concluded that the human condition had always been more or less the same, or that history ran in cycles, or that it was the story of gradual decline from a mythological state of perfection. Only in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did intellectuals and much

of the general populace come to believe that the past was a burden and that human beings could effect changes in their condition that were beneficial, not destructive. In a word, people began to believe in progress.

The West's belief in progress can be traced back to the eighteenth century when during the Age of Enlightenment many thinkers became convinced that well-intentioned human beings could employ reason to erase at least some of the cruelties, superstitions, and prejudices that diminished the human condition. By the end of the eighteenth century some went further and developed a theory of human progress that saw humanity ascending from ignorance and darkness to a utopian future. The most famous prophet of progress was the Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794), a mathematician, philosopher, and educational reformer. He supported the French Revolution but, like many moderates, fell afoul of the radical Jacobins and was forced to go into hiding in July 1793. It was then he wrote his *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind*, which traces human progress in ten stages from the dawn of history to the French Revolution and into the future. Having completed his work in March 1794, he emerged from hiding, was arrested immediately, and was found dead the next morning of unknown causes.

The following excerpts come from “The Ninth Stage,” in which he discusses developments from the mid seventeenth century to the beginning of the French Revolution, and “The Tenth Stage,” in which he describes the future.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What factors, according to Condorcet, have impeded progress in the past?
2. According to Condorcet, scientific achievement was the outstanding feature of humanity's “ninth stage.” In what ways did science in this era change human thinking and affect human society?
3. Condorcet is not proud of the Europeans' record in dealing with the peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. What groups does he blame for the Europeans' unenlightened behavior in these regions?
4. Why is Condorcet confident that Europeans will modify their behavior in Asia and Africa? What will be the result? Does Condorcet show any interest in preserving the customs and beliefs of the Asians and Africans?
5. What in Condorcet's view caused the oppression of women in the past? Why does he reject such oppression, and what positive results in his view will result from ending it?
6. What role will technology play in humanity's tenth stage? How are Condorcet's views on this issue similar to those expressed by Francis Bacon (source 36)?

## NINTH EPOCH

*From Descartes to the  
Formation of the French Republic*

Until now we have demonstrated the progress of philosophy only in those men who have cultivated, deepened, and perfected it: it now remains to reveal what have been its effects on general opinion, and how reason, while ascending at last to a sure method of discovering and recognizing truth, learned how to preserve itself from the errors into which respect for authority and the imagination have often dragged it: at the same time it destroyed within the general mass of people the prejudices that have afflicted and corrupted the human race for so long a time.

Humanity was finally permitted to boldly proclaim the long ignored right to submit every opinion to reason, that is, to utilize the only instrument given to us for grasping and recognizing the truth. Each human learned with a sort of pride that nature had never destined him to believe the word of others. The superstitions of antiquity and the abasement of reason before the madness of supernatural religion disappeared from society just as they had disappeared from philosophy. . . .

If we were to limit ourselves to showing the benefits derived from the immediate applications of the sciences, or in their applications to man-made devices for the well-being of individuals and the prosperity of nations, we would be making known only a slim part of their benefits. The most important, perhaps, is having destroyed prejudices and re-established human intelligence, which until then had been forced to bend down to false instructions instilled in it by absurd beliefs passed on to the children of each generation by the terrors of superstition and the fear of tyranny. . . .

The advances of scientific knowledge are all the more deadly to these errors because they destroy them without appearing to attack them, while lavishing on those who stubbornly defend them the degrading taunt of ignorance. . . .

Finally this progress of scientific knowledge, which neither the passions nor self-interest is going to disturb, results in a belief that not birth, professional status, or social standing gives anyone the right to judge something he does not understand. This unstoppable progress cannot be observed without having enlightened men search unceasingly for ways to make the other branches of learning follow the same path. It offers them at every step a model to follow, according to which they will be able to judge their own efforts and recognize false paths on which they have embarked. It protects them from skepticism, credulity, blind caution, and even exaggerated submission to the knowledgeable and famous. . . .

## TENTH EPOCH

*The Future Progress of the Human Mind*

Our hopes for the future of the human species may be reduced to three important points: the destruction of inequality among nations; the progress of equality within nations themselves; and finally, the real improvement of humanity. Should not all the nations of the world approach one day the state of civilization reached by the most enlightened peoples such as the French and the Anglo-Americans? Will not the slavery of nations subjected to kings, the barbarity of African tribes, and the ignorance of savages gradually disappear? Are there on the globe countries whose very nature has condemned them never to enjoy liberty and never exercise their reason? . . .

If we cast an eye at the existing state of the globe, we will see right away that in Europe the principles of the French constitution are already those of all enlightened men. We will see that they are too widely disseminated and too openly professed for the efforts of tyrants and priests to prevent them from penetrating into the hovels of their slaves, where they will soon rekindle those embers of good sense and that muffled indignation that the habit of suffering and ter-

ror have failed to totally extinguish in the minds of the oppressed. . . .

Can it be doubted that either wisdom or the senseless feuds of the European nations themselves, working with the slow but certain effects of progress in their colonies, will not soon produce the independence of the new world; and that then the European population, spreading rapidly across that immense land, must either civilize or make disappear the savage peoples that now inhabit these vast continents?

If one runs through the history of our undertakings and establishments in Africa and Asia, you will see our commercial monopolies, our treacheries, our bloodthirsty contempt for people of a different color and belief; the insolence of our usurpations; the extravagant missionary activities and intrigues of our priests which destroy their feelings of respect and benevolence that the superiority of our enlightenment and the advantages of our commerce had first obtained. But the moment is approaching, without any doubt, when ceasing to present ourselves to these peoples as tyrants or corrupters, we will become instruments of their improvement and their noble liberators. . . .

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- ▷ Slavery will be abolished, free trade established on the world's oceans, and European political authority in Asia and Africa ended.
- 

Then the Europeans, limiting themselves to free trade, too knowledgeable of their own rights to show contempt for the rights of others, will respect this independence that until now they have violated with such audacity. Then their settlements, instead of being filled with government favorites by virtue of their rank or privileges who hasten by pillaging and dishonesty to amass fortunes so they can return to Europe to buy honors and titles, will be populated by hard-working men, seeking in these happy climates the affluence that eluded them in their homeland. . . . These settlements of robbers will become colonies of citizens who will plant in

Africa and Asia the principles and the example of European liberty, enlightenment, and reason. In place of clergy who carry to these people nothing but the most shameful superstitions and who disgust them and menace them with a new form of domination, one will see men taking their place who are devoted to spreading among the nations useful truths about their happiness, and explaining to them both the concept of their own interest and of their rights. . . .

Thus the day will come when the sun will shine only on free men born knowing no other master but their reason; where tyrants and their slaves, priests and their ignorant, hypocritical writings will exist only in the history books and theaters; where we will only be occupied with mourning their victims and their dupes; when we will maintain an active vigilance by remembering their horrors; when we will learn to recognize and stifle by the force of reason the first seeds of superstition and tyranny, if ever they dare to appear! . . .

- 
- ▷ Condorcet explains how education and scientific knowledge will be made available to all.
- 

If we consider the human creations based on scientific theories, we shall see that their progress can have no limits; that the procedures in constructing them can be improved and simplified just like those of scientific procedures; that new tools, machines, and looms will add every day to the capabilities and skill of humans; they will improve and perfect the precision of their products while decreasing the amount of time and labor needed to produce them. Then the obstacles in the path of this progress will disappear, accidents will be foreseen and prevented, the unhealthy conditions that are due either to the work itself or the climate will be eliminated.

A smaller piece of land will be able to produce commodities of greater usefulness and value than before; greater benefits will be obtained with less waste; the production of the same industrial product will result in less destruction of raw



materials and greater durability. We will be able to choose for each type of soil the production of goods that will satisfy the greatest number of wants and with the least amount of labor and expenditure. Thus without any sacrifice, the means of achieving conservation and limiting waste will follow the progress of the art of producing various goods, preparing them, and making them into finished products. Thus . . . each individual will work less but more productively and will be able to better satisfy his needs. . . .

Among the advances of the human mind we should reckon as most important for the general welfare is the complete destruction of those prejudices that have established an inequality of rights between the sexes, an inequality damaging even to the party it favors. One will look in vain for reasons to justify it on the basis of differences in physical make up, the strength of intellect, and moral sensibility. This inequality has no other root cause than the abuse of force, and it is to no purpose to try to excuse it through sophistical arguments. We will show how the abolition of practices condoned by this prejudice will increase the well-being of families and encourage domestic virtues, the prime foundation of all others; how it will favor the progress of education, and especially make it truly universal, partly because it will be extended to both sexes more equitably, and partly because it cannot be truly universal even for males without the co-operation of mothers in families. . . .

Would it not produce what until now has been a dream, namely national manners and customs, gentle and pure, not shaped by prideful displays of asceticism, hypocritical appearances, or modesty inspired by fear of shame or religious terrors, but by freely acquired habits inspired by nature and approved by reason?

The most enlightened people, having seized for themselves the right to control their life and treasure, will slowly come to perceive war as the deadliest plague and the most monstrous of crimes. . . . They will understand that they cannot become conquerors without losing their liberty; that perpetual alliances are the only way to

preserve independence; and that they should seek their security not power. . . .

We may conclude then that the perfectibility of humanity is indefinite. However, until now, we have imagined humanity with the same natural abilities and physical make-up as at the present. How great will our certitude be, and how limitless our hopes, if one were to believe that these natural abilities themselves, this physical make-up, are also capable of improvement? This is the last question we shall consider.

The organic perfectibility or degeneration of species of plants and animals may be regarded as one of the general laws of nature. This law is also applicable to the human species. No one can doubt that progress in preventive medicine, the use of healthier food and housing, a way of living that increases strength through exercise without destroying it through excess, and finally, the destruction of the two most persistent causes of deterioration, poverty and excessive wealth, will lengthen for human beings the average life span and assure more good health and a stronger constitution. Clearly, improvements in medical practices resulting from the progress of reason and the order of society, will cause transmittable and contagious diseases to disappear as well as diseases caused by climate, nourishment, and certain vocations. . . . Would it be absurd then to imagine . . . that we will arrive at a time when death will be nothing more than the result of extraordinary accidents or of the gradual destruction of vital forces, and that as a result, the interval between birth and the time of that destruction will no longer have a fixed term? . . .

Finally, can we not also extend the same hopes to the intellectual and moral faculties? . . . Is it not also probable that education, while perfecting these qualities, will also influence, modify, and improve that bodily nature itself? Analogy, analysis of the development of human faculties, and even certain facts seem to prove the reality of such conjectures, which extend even further the limits of our hopes. . . .

How much does this picture of the human species, freed of all chains, released from the

empire of blind fate and the enemies of progress, and marching with a firm and sure pace on the path of truth, virtue, and honor, present the philosopher with a scene that consoles him for the errors, crimes, and injustices that still defile the earth and often victimize him? In contemplation of this scene he receives the reward for his efforts on behalf of the advance of reason and the defense of liberty. . . . Such contemplation is a

place of refuge where the memories of his persecutors cannot follow him, where living with the thought of humans established in their natural rights and dignity, he forgets the way greed, fear, and envy have tormented and corrupted them. It is there he truly exists with his fellow humans in an Elysium<sup>1</sup> which his reason has created and which his love of humanity adorns with the purest pleasures.

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<sup>1</sup>In Greek mythology, Elysium, also known as the Elysian Fields or the Isles of the Blessed, was the dwelling place

after death of virtuous mortals or those given immortality by divine favor.



## Capitalism's Prophet



### ▼ Adam Smith, *THE WEALTH OF NATIONS*

Surprisingly few biographical details are known about Adam Smith, the economist famed for his devastating critique of mercantilism in *The Wealth of Nations*. Born in 1723 in a small Scottish fishing village and educated at Glasgow and Oxford, between 1751 and 1763 he held chairs in logic and moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow. The publication of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1759 ensured his literary and philosophical reputation. In 1763 he became the tutor of an English aristocrat's son and lived for three years in France, where he met many prominent French intellectuals. From 1767 to 1776 he lived in semi-retirement in Scotland and finished *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. In 1778 he became commissioner of customs in Scotland and died in Edinburgh in 1790.

*The Wealth of Nations* went through five English editions and was published in several European translations in the eighteenth century. Its importance lies in its general approach to economics, which brought systematic analysis to wages, labor, trade, population, rents, and money supply, and in its unrelenting assault on mercantilism. The key to economic growth, Smith asserted, was not regulation but free competition among individuals and among nations.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Smith denies that a nation's wealth consists of the amount of gold and silver it controls. What arguments does he present to defend his position, and what are their implications for trade policy?
2. Smith suggests a paradox that each individual by pursuing his or her own self-interest promotes the general welfare of society. What specific



examples of this paradox are provided? What implications does this paradox have for government policy?

3. What groups in society would you expect to be most enthusiastic about Smith's ideas? Why? What groups might be expected to oppose them?
4. The novelty of Smith's ideas can best be understood by comparing them with those of Colbert (source 39). How do the two men disagree about the following issues: (a) the benefits of government economic regulation, (b) economic competition among nations, and (c) the meaning of the balance of trade?

## SELF-INTEREST AND THE FREE MARKET

1. This division of labor,<sup>1</sup> from which so many advantages are derived, is not originally the effect of any human wisdom, which foresees and intends that general opulence to which it gives occasion. It is the necessary, though very slow and gradual consequence of a certain propensity in human nature which has in view no such extensive utility; the propensity to truck,<sup>2</sup> barter, and exchange one thing for another.

2. Whether this propensity be one of those original principles in human nature, of which no further account can be given; or whether, as seems more probable, it be the necessary consequence of the faculties of reason and speech, it belongs not to our present subject to enquire. It is common to all men, and to be found in no other race of animals, which seem to know neither this nor any other species of contracts. . . . Nobody ever saw a dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another with another dog. Nobody ever saw one animal by its gestures and natural cries signify to another, this is mine, that yours; I am willing to give this for that. . . . In almost every other race of animals each individual, which it is grown up to maturity, is entirely independent, and in its natural

state has occasion for the assistance of no other living creature. But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favor, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens. . . .

## PRICES AND THE FREE MARKET

The quantity of every commodity brought to market naturally suits itself to the effectual demand. It is the interest of all those who employ their land, labor, or stock,<sup>3</sup> in bringing any com-

<sup>1</sup>This section of *The Wealth of Nations* follows a long discussion of the *division of labor*. As utilized by Smith, this term refers to economic specialization, both in terms of different professions and in terms of the separate tasks carried out by different individuals in the process of manufacturing or preparing commodities for the market.

<sup>2</sup>A synonym for barter.

<sup>3</sup>Money or capital invested or available for investment or trading.

modity to market, that the quantity never should exceed the effectual demand; and it is the interest of all other people that it never should fall short of that demand.

If at any time it exceeds the effectual demand, some of the component parts of its price must be paid below their natural rate. If it is rent,<sup>4</sup> the interest of the landlords will immediately prompt them to withdraw a part of their land; and if it is wages or profit, the interest of the laborers in the one case, and of their employers in the other, will prompt them to withdraw a part of their labor or stock from this employment. The quantity brought to market will soon be no more than sufficient to supply the effectual demand. All the different parts of its price will rise to their natural rate, and the whole price to its natural price.

If, on the contrary, the quantity brought to market should at any time fall short of the effectual demand, some of the component parts of its price must rise above their natural rate. If it is rent, the interest of all other landlords will naturally prompt them to prepare more land for the raising of this commodity; if it is wages or profit, the interest of all other laborers and dealers will soon prompt them to employ more labor and stock in preparing and bringing it to market. The quantity brought thither will soon be sufficient to supply the effectual demand. All the different parts of its price will soon sink to their natural rate, and the whole price to its natural price. . . .

The monopolists, by keeping the market constantly under-stocked, by never fully supplying the effectual demand, sell their commodities much above the natural price, and raise their emoluments,<sup>5</sup> whether they consist in wages or profit, greatly above their natural rate.

The price of monopoly is upon every occasion the highest which can be got. The natural price, or the price of free competition, on the contrary, is the lowest which can be taken, not upon every

occasion, indeed, but for any considerable time together. The one is upon every occasion the highest which can be squeezed out of the buyers, or which, it is supposed, they will consent to give: The other is the lowest which the sellers can commonly afford to take, and at the same time continue their business.

The exclusive privileges of corporations, statutes of apprenticeship,<sup>6</sup> and all those laws which restrain, in particular employments, the competition to a smaller number than might otherwise go into them, have the same tendency, though in a less degree. They are a sort of enlarged monopolies, and may frequently, for ages together and in whole classes of employments, keep up the market price of particular commodities above the natural price, and maintain both the wages of the labor and the profits of the stock employed about them somewhat above their natural rate.

## MERCANTALIST FALLACIES

That wealth consists in money, or in gold and silver, is a popular notion which naturally arises from the double function of money, as the instrument of commerce, and as the measure of value. In consequence of its being the instrument of commerce, when we have money we can more readily obtain whatever else we have occasion for, than by means of any other commodity. The great affair [thing to do], we always find, is to get money. . . .

A rich country, in the same manner as a rich man, is supposed to be a country abounding in money; and to heap up gold and silver in any country is supposed to be the readiest way to enrich it. . . .

In consequence of these popular notions, all the different nations of Europe have studied, though to little purpose, every possible means

<sup>4</sup>In this sense, the cost of land in terms of the payments made by tenants to their landlord.

<sup>5</sup>The returns from employment, usually in the form of compensation.

<sup>6</sup>Laws that restricted the number of individuals who could receive training in trades through apprenticeship.

of accumulating gold and silver in their respective countries. Spain and Portugal, the proprietors of the principal mines which supply Europe with those metals, have either prohibited their exportation under the severest penalties, or subjected it to a considerable duty. The like prohibition seems anciently to have [been] made a part of the policy of most other European nations. When those countries became commercial, the merchants found this prohibition, upon many occasions, extremely inconvenient. . . .

They represented [stated forcefully], first, that the exportation of gold and silver in order to purchase foreign goods, did not always diminish the quantity of those metals in the kingdom. . . .

They represented, secondly, that this prohibition could not hinder the exportation of gold and silver, which, on account of the smallness of their bulk in proportion to their value, could easily be smuggled abroad. . . .

Those arguments . . . were solid so far as they asserted that the exportation of gold and silver in trade might frequently be advantageous to the country. They were solid too, in asserting that no prohibition could prevent their exportation, when private people found any advantage in exporting them. But they were sophistical in supposing, that either to preserve or to augment the quantity of those metals required more the attention of government, than to preserve or to augment the quantity of any other useful commodities, which the freedom of trade, without any such attention, never fails to supply in the proper quantity. . . .

A country that has no mines of its own must undoubtedly draw its gold and silver from foreign countries, in the same manner as one that has no vineyards of its own must draw its wines. It does not seem necessary, however, that the attention of government should be more turned towards the one than towards the other object. A country that has wherewithal to buy wine, will always get the wine which it has occasion for; and a country that has wherewithal to buy gold and silver, will never be in want of those metals.

They are to be bought for a certain price like all other commodities, and as they are the price of all other commodities, so all other commodities are the price of those metals. We trust with perfect security that the freedom of trade, without any attention of government, will always supply us with the wine which we have occasion for: and we may trust with equal security that it will always supply us with all the gold and silver which we can afford to purchase or to employ, either in circulating our commodities, or in other uses.

▼ ▼ ▼

By restraining, either by high duties, or by absolute prohibitions, the importation of such goods from foreign countries as can be produced at home, the monopoly of the home market is more or less secured to the domestic industry employed in producing them. . . . But whether it tends either to increase the general industry of the society, or to give it the most advantageous direction, is not, perhaps, altogether so evident. . . .

Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage, naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society.

First, every individual endeavors to employ his capital as near home as he can, and consequently as much as he can in the support of domestic industry, provided always that he can thereby obtain the ordinary, or not a great deal less than the ordinary, profits of stock.

Secondly, every individual who employs his capital in the support of domestic industry, necessarily endeavors so to direct that industry, that its produce may be of the greatest possible value. . . .

As every individual, therefore, endeavors as much as he can both to employ his capital in the



support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value, every individual necessarily labors to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. . . .

What is the species of domestic industry which his capital can employ, and of which the produce is likely to be of the greatest value, every individual, it is evident, can, in his local situation, judge much better than any statesman or lawgiver can do for him. The statesman who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capital, would not only load himself with a most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be trusted, not only to no single person, but to no council or senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it.

To give the monopoly of the home market to the produce of domestic industry, in any particular art or manufacture, is in some measure to direct private people in what manner they ought

to employ their capital, and must, in almost all cases, be either a useless or a hurtful regulation. If the produce of domestic [industry] can be brought there as cheap as that of foreign industry, the regulation is evidently useless. If it cannot, it must generally be hurtful. It is the maxim of every prudent master of a family, never to attempt to make at home what it will cost him more to make than to buy. . . .

What is prudence in the conduct of every private family, can scarce be folly in that of a great kingdom. If a foreign country can supply us with a commodity cheaper than we ourselves can make it, better buy it of them with some part of the produce of our own industry, employed in a way in which we have some advantage. . . .

To expect, indeed, that the freedom of trade should ever be entirely restored in Great Britain, is as absurd as to expect that an Oceania or Utopia should ever be established in it. Not only the prejudices of the public, but what is much more unconquerable, the private interests of many individuals, irresistibly oppose it. . . .

The undertaker of a great manufacture, who, by the home markets being suddenly laid open to the competition of foreigners, should be obliged to abandon his trade, would no doubt suffer very considerably. That part of his capital which had usually been employed in purchasing materials and in paying his workmen might, without much difficulty perhaps, find another employment. But that part of it which was fixed in workhouses, and in the instruments of trade, could scarce be disposed of without considerable loss. The equitable regard, therefore, to his interest requires that changes of this kind should never be introduced suddenly, but slowly, gradually, and after a very long warning.



## A Program for Revolutionary Change in France



### ▼ *CAHIER OF THE THIRD ESTATE OF THE CITY OF PARIS*

The French Revolution began because of a problem that has plagued rulers since the beginning of organized government — King Louis XVI and his ministers could not balance their budget. In 1788, having exhausted every other solution, the king agreed to convene a meeting of the Estates General, France's representative assembly, which had last met in 1614. He hoped it would solve the government's fiscal plight by approving new taxes. The nobility, having fended off every effort to curtail its tax exemptions and privileges, saw the convening of the Estates General as an opportunity to increase its power at the expense of the monarchy. For both king and nobility the calling of the Estates General had unexpected results: The nobility lost its privileges, and the king lost most of his power and, in 1793, having been judged a traitor to the Revolution, his head.

Neither Louis nor the nobles had comprehended the French people's disgust with royal absolutism and aristocratic privilege. Nor had they sensed the degree to which the Enlightenment and the English and American revolutions had committed the people to fundamental change. Having convened in May 1789, within months the Estates General transformed itself into a National Assembly, dismantled the laws and institutions of the Old Regime, and set about creating a new political order based on constitutionalism, equality, and natural rights.

Even before the Estates General met, the French populace was in a high pitch of political excitement as a result of the procedures adopted for choosing delegates. The delegates representing the three orders of French society — the First Estate, or clergy, the Second Estate, or nobility, and the Third Estate, everyone else from peasants to wealthy city-dwellers — were to be chosen in a complicated process that began with village and neighborhood assemblies and ended at the

level of *baillages*, larger districts based on divisions in the French judicial system. At each electoral assembly, of which there were forty thousand, those attending were encouraged to draw up a *cahier de doléances*, a memorandum of grievances, in which all kinds of ideas on local and national affairs could be expressed. These would be passed on to editorial committees at the baillage level, whose members would sift through them and integrate them into final cahiers to send on to Versailles, where the Estates General would meet.

We have chosen to include excerpts from the cahier of the Third Estate of the city of Paris. A document largely created by lawyers and businessmen, it presents a fair sampling of the grievances and expectations of urban, upper-middle-class Frenchmen who, with the help of peasants, artisans, shopkeepers, and women, provided the impetus for the unfolding revolution.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does the proposed declaration of rights in this cahier compare to the political rights outlined in the English Bill of Rights (source 43)?
2. What view of monarchy is expressed in the cahier? How does it compare with the views of monarchy expressed in the English Bill of Rights (source 43)?
3. What views are expressed in the cahier about the position of the nobility and clergy in French society?
4. It has been said that the French Revolution was about legal privilege, not monarchy. Do the thoughts expressed in this cahier bear this out?
5. What solutions does the cahier offer for the French government's fiscal crisis?
6. In what ways does this document represent the interests of the urban middle class? To what extent does it show concern for other groups in French society?
7. What kind of government does the cahier envision for France?
8. In its discussion of government, does the cahier ignore or gloss over any issues that later might prove controversial once the revolution began?

### DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

In every political society all men are equal in rights.

All power emanates from the nation, and can be utilized only for its wellbeing.

The general will makes the law; public might ensures its execution.

The nation alone can grant the means to support the government; it has the right to determine the amount, to limit its duration, to amend it, to determine its use, to demand an

accounting of it; and to insist on the accounting's publication.

Laws exist only to guarantee each individual's ownership of his property and the security of his person. All property is inviolable.

No citizen may be arrested or punished except by legal trial.

Every citizen has the right to be admitted to all employments, professions, and offices.

The natural, civil, and religious liberty of each man, his personal security, and his absolute independence of every authority except that of the

law, bar all enquiry into his opinions, speech, writings, and actions, so long as they do not disturb public order, and do not infringe on the rights of others.

In keeping with the declaration of rights of the nation, our delegates shall demand the end of: personal servitude; compulsory militia service; the violation of the public faith in regard to letters entrusted to the mail; and all exclusive privileges except to inventors, to whom they will be granted for a limited time only.

As a result of these principles, liberty of the press is to be granted on the condition that authors sign their writings; that the publisher be known, and that both will be held responsible for the consequences of their publications.

The declaration of these natural, civil and political rights shall become the national charter and the basis of the French government.

## CONSTITUTION

In the French monarchy, legislative power belongs to the nation conjointly with the king; executive power belongs to the king alone.

No tax can be established except by the nation.

The Estates General shall meet at three-year intervals.

Any person convicted of having done anything tending to prevent the meeting of the Estates General shall be declared a traitor to the nation, guilty of high treason, and punished as such. . . .

The order and form of the convening of the Estates General and of the national representation shall be fixed by law.

Our delegates shall approve of the demand of the colony of Saint Domingue<sup>1</sup> to be admitted to the Estates General; they shall demand that representatives of other colonies shall also be ad-

mitted, as they are our brothers, and should share in all the advantages of the French constitution.

The monarch's person is sacred and inviolable. The succession to the throne is hereditary in the reigning family, in the male line, by order of primogeniture, to the exclusion of women and their descendants, male or female, and can only fall on a prince born French, within lawful marriage. . . .

At the beginning of each new reign the king shall swear an oath to the nation, and the nation to the king; the form of which shall be determined by the Estates General.

No citizen may be arrested, nor his home violated, by virtue of *lettres de cachet*,<sup>2</sup> or any other order emanating from the executive power, . . . all persons who have solicited, countersigned, and executed them being subject to special prosecution and corporal punishment. . . .

The whole kingdom will be divided into provincial assemblies, made up of people who live in the province, elected freely by all the orders. . . .

Public administration, in all matters having to do with the allocation and collection of taxes, agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, communications, public works projects, construction, and public morals shall be entrusted to the provincial assemblies.

Cities, towns, and villages shall likewise have elected municipal authorities which, like the assemblies, shall administer local affairs.

Judicial authority shall be exercised in France in the name of the king by tribunals composed of members completely independent of any act by the executive power.

Nobles will be able to participate in commerce and other useful professions without losing their status.<sup>3</sup> The Estates General shall establish a civic

<sup>1</sup>Saint Domingue was a French colony on the western third of the island of Hispaniola, acquired by treaty from Spain in 1697. At the time of the revolution, its population of 520,000 consisted of 450,000 slaves and 30,000 mulattos. The remaining 40,000 were whites of French extraction.

<sup>2</sup>Literally "sealed letters;" a form of warrant issued under the king's signature for arbitrary arrest and imprisonment in prerevolutionary France.

<sup>3</sup>According to French law, members of the nobility lost their noble status if they participated in business activities involving commerce, manufacturing, and banking, all considered "middle class" professions. Nobles were expected to derive their income from landholding, investments, or government service.



and honorary award, personal and not hereditary, which will be conferred by the king without discrimination on citizens of any order who merit it by the loftiness of their patriotic virtue and by the importance of their public service.

The charter of the constitution shall be engraved on a public monument raised for this purpose. A reading of it shall be made to the king at the ascension to his throne, and then shall be followed by his oath. . . . All agents of the executive power, civil and military, all judicial magistrates, all municipal officers shall swear an oath to uphold the charter. Every year on the anniversary of its approval, the charter shall be read and posted in the churches, courts, schools, and at the headquarters of each regiment and on naval vessels. The day will be a day of solemn celebration in every country under French dominion.

## FINANCES

The Estates General shall void every special tax, on persons or on property, such as the *taille*, the *franc-fief*, head tax, military service, the *corvée*,<sup>4</sup> the billeting of troops, and others, and replace them as needed by general taxes, payable by all citizens of every order.

The Estates General in the outright replacement of taxes, shall consider principally direct taxes, which will bear equally on all citizens and all provinces and which will be simplest and less expensive to collect.

## AGRICULTURE

The deputies will be especially charged to demand the total abolition of *capitaineries*;<sup>5</sup> they are in such contradiction to every principle of mo-

rality that they cannot be tolerated, even under the pretext of getting rid of some of their worst abuses.

It is the natural right of any proprietor of land to be able to destroy on his land destructive game and other animals.<sup>6</sup> In regard to hunting rights and the means of employing them, whether for their suppression or preservation, we look to the Estates General to suppress their abuses in a timely manner.

## LEGISLATION

The object of the laws is to protect liberty and property. Their perfection is to be humane and just, clear and general, to be in keeping with the national character and morality, to protect people of every order and every class equally, and to punish without distinction of persons whoever violates the law.

## TREATMENT OF CRIMINALS

No citizen can be arrested or obliged to appear before any judge without an order coming from a competent judge. Every accused person, even before his first interrogation, shall have the right to call a lawyer.

A law will be passed to suppress the use of all torture before a criminal is executed and all practices that add prolonged and cruel suffering to the execution.

The death penalty should be limited to the smallest number of cases as possible, and reserved for truly atrocious crimes.

Those guilty of the same crime, no matter what order of society they are from, should undergo the same punishment.

<sup>4</sup>*Taille*: a tax on land paid mainly by peasants; *franc-fief*: a fee paid by a nonnoble on the acquisition of land; *corvée*: unpaid labor demanded mainly from peasants by their landlords.

<sup>5</sup>Hunting monopolies granted mainly to members of the high nobility.

<sup>6</sup>Laws prevented peasants from destroying crop-damaging birds and rabbits; their purpose was to protect the supply of animals hunted by the nobility.



Prisons should have the purpose not of punishing prisoners but of securing their persons. Underground dungeons should be suppressed. Efforts should be made to make the interior of other prisons healthier, and to establish rules for the moral conduct of the prisoners.

The Estates General should consider the plight of black slaves and men of color, in the colonies as well as in France.

## RELIGION

{Religion's} ministers, as citizens of the state, are subject to the law; as property owners, they must bear a share of all public expenditure.

The Christian religion ordains civil toleration; every citizen must enjoy private liberty of conscience, but the requirements of law and order require only one dominant religion. . . .



## “Simple Facts, Plain Arguments, and Common Sense”

### ▼ *Thomas Paine, COMMON SENSE*

After more than a decade of growing tension over taxes, British imperial policy, the power of colonial legislatures, and a host of other emotionally charged issues, in April 1775 the American Revolution began with the clash between British regulars and American militiamen at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. In May the Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allen took Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain, and in June the British defeated colonial troops in the Battle of Bunker Hill outside of Boston but at the cost of more than a thousand casualties.

Despite these events, in the summer and fall of 1775 most Americans still hoped reconciliation with Great Britain was possible. They were convinced that evil ministers, not the king, were responsible for British policy and that views of conciliatory British politicians such as Edmund Burke would prevail. Then in January 1776 there appeared in Philadelphia a thirty-five page pamphlet entitled *Common Sense* written by Thomas Paine (1737–1809), a bankrupt one-time corset-maker, sailor, tobacconist, and minor customs official, who had immigrated to Pennsylvania from England only fourteen months earlier to escape debtor's prison. Despite his background, Paine produced what was far and away the most brilliant political pamphlet written during the American Revolution, and perhaps ever in the English language.

Within three months *Common Sense* sold more than one hundred thousand copies, one for every four or five adult males in the colonies. It “burst from the press,” wrote Benjamin Rush, the Pennsylvania physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, “with an effect which has rarely been produced in any age or country.” Written with passion and vivid imagery, Paine's pamphlet brought into focus American reservations about England and the European world and

expressed American aspirations for creating a newer, freer, more open society as an independent nation. It accelerated the move toward the events of July 2, 1776, when the delegates to the Second Continental Congress created the United States of America, and of July 4, when they signed the Declaration of Independence.

During the Revolutionary War Paine fought in Washington's army and composed pamphlets to bolster American spirits. In the late 1780s he returned to England but in 1792 was forced to flee to France after his public support of the French Revolution led to his indictment for sedition. Chosen as a delegate to the French National Convention (although he knew no French), Paine was later imprisoned for ten months during the Reign of Terror, and on release resided with James Monroe, the American ambassador to France. While in France he attacked Christianity in his pamphlet *The Age of Reason*, the notoriety of which was such that on his return to the United States in 1802 he was vilified as an atheist. Impoverished and disgraced, he died unheralded in New York City in 1809.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are Paine's views of the origins and defects of monarchy as a form of government and hereditary succession as a principle of government?
2. What are his views of King George III?
3. What characteristics does Paine ascribe to Great Britain in general and the British government in particular? How might his background explain his negative views?
4. How does Paine counter the arguments of Americans who still sought reconciliation with Great Britain?
5. Despite Paine's rejection of the British government, do his ideas in *Common Sense* owe a debt to the principles of the English Bill of Rights?
6. What is there about the pamphlet's language, tone, and arguments that might explain its enormous popularity?

### REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION

I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature which no art can overturn, viz. that the more simple anything is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered, and with this maxim in view, I offer a few remarks on the so much boasted constitution of England. That it was noble for the dark and slavish times in which it was erected, is granted. When the world was over-run with tyranny, the least remove therefrom was

a glorious rescue. But that it is imperfect, subject to convulsions, and incapable of producing what it seems to promise, is easily demonstrated.

Absolute governments (though the disgrace of human nature) have this advantage with them, they are simple; if the people suffer, they know the head from which their suffering springs; know likewise the remedy; and are not bewildered by a variety of causes and cures. But the constitution of England is so exceedingly complex that the nation may suffer for years together without being able to discover in which part the fault lies; some will say in one and some in



another, and every political physician will advise a different medicine.

An inquiry into the *constitutional errors* in the English form of government is at this time highly necessary; for as we are never in a proper condition of doing justice to others while we continue under the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are we capable of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered by any obstinate prejudice. And as a man who is attached to a prostitute is unfitted to choose or judge of a wife, so any prepossession in favor of a rotten constitution of government will disable us from discerning a good one.

## OF MONARCHY AND HEREDITARY SUCCESSION

Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the Devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The heathens paid divine honors to their deceased kings, and the Christian world has improved on the plan by doing the same to their living ones.<sup>1</sup> How impious is the title of sacred Majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust! . . .

To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of rights, is an insult and imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equals, no one by birth could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others forever, and though himself might deserve some decent degree of honors of his contemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them. . . .

Secondly, as no man at first could possess any other public honors than were bestowed upon him, so the givers of those honors could have no

power to give away the right of posterity, and though they might say "we choose you for our head," they could not without manifest injustice to their children say "that your children and your children's children shall reign over ours forever." Because such an unwise, unjust, unnatural compact might perhaps, in the next succession put them under the government of a rogue or a fool. . . .

This is supposing the present race of kings in the world to have had an honorable origin; whereas it is more than probable that, could we take off the dark covering of antiquity and trace them to their first rise, we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang. . . . England, since the conquest, hath known some few good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones; yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honorable one. A French bastard, landing with an armed banditti and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it. . . .

The most plausible plea which hath ever been offered in favor of hereditary succession is that it preserves a nation from civil wars; and were this true, it would be weighty; whereas, it is the most barefaced falsity ever imposed upon mankind. The whole history of England disowns the fact. Thirty kings and two minors have reigned in that distracted kingdom since the conquest, in which time there have been (including the Revolution) no less than eight civil wars and nineteen rebellions. Wherefore instead of making for peace, it makes against it, and destroys the very foundation it seems to stand upon. . . .

In short, monarchy and succession have laid (not this or that kingdom only) but the world in blood and ashes. 'Tis a form of government which the word of god bears testimony against, and blood will attend it.

<sup>1</sup>The reference is to the theory of divine right monarchy, which asserted that kings were God's specially chosen lieutenants to rule his subjects, and were even in some limited sense divine figures themselves.

## THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms as the last resource decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the king, and the continent has accepted the challenge. . . .

The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a county, a province, or a kingdom; but of a continent — of at least one-eighth part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time by the proceedings now. Now is the seedtime of continental union, faith, and honor. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound would enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters. . . .

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness. . . . Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true; for

I answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessities of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed<sup>2</sup> us is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz., for the sake of trade and dominion. . . .

We have boasted the protection of Great Britain without considering that her motive was *interest*, not *attachment*; and that she did not protect us from *our enemies* on *our account*, but from her enemies on her own account, from those who had no quarrel with us on any *other account*, and who will always be our enemies on the *same account*. . . .

As I have always considered the independency of this continent an event which sooner or later must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event cannot be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest; otherwise it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for a reconciliation than myself, before the fatal nineteenth of April, 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England forever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent. And that for several reasons.

*First.* The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the king, he will have a negative<sup>3</sup> over the whole legislation of this continent. And as he hath shown himself such an inveterate en-

<sup>2</sup>To occupy with troops.

<sup>3</sup>A veto.

emy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper person to say to these colonies, *You shall make no laws but what I please!* . . .

*Secondly.* That as even the best terms which we can expect to obtain can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things in the interim will be unsettled and unpromising. Emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and who is every day tottering on the brink of commotion and disturbance; and numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects, and quit the continent. . . .

If there is any true cause of fear respecting independence, it is because no plan is yet laid down. Men do not see their way out. Wherefore, as an opening into that business I offer the following hints; at the same time modestly affirming that I have no other opinion of them myself than that they may be the means of giving rise to something better. . . .

Let the assemblies be annual, with a president only. The representation more equal, their business wholly domestic, and subject to the authority of a continental congress.

Let each colony be divided into six, eight, or ten, convenient districts, each district to send a proper number of delegates to congress, so that each colony send at least thirty. The whole number in congress will be at least 390. Each congress to sit and to choose a president by the following method. When the delegates are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen colonies by lot, after which let the congress choose (by ballot) a president from out of the delegates of that province. In the next congress, let a colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that colony from which the president was taken in the former congress, and so pro-

ceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three fifths of the congress to be called a majority. He that will promote discord, under a government so equally formed as this, would have joined Lucifer in his revolt. . . .

But where, say some, is the king of America? I'll tell you, friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Great Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the Word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law *ought* to BE king, and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is. . . .

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the continent forgive the murders of Britain. . . .

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.







## Images of Imperialism in Great Britain



### ▼ *ADVERTISEMENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM BRITISH BOOKS AND PERIODICALS*

Although late-nineteenth-century imperialism had its critics, there is no doubt that in the major imperialist states it had broad support, not just from investors, missionary groups, and civil servants who had direct interests in Africa and Asia but also from the general populace. People avidly read accounts of military victories in distant lands, followed the exploits of explorers and missionaries, and celebrated each time another piece of Africa or Asia came under their nation's control. Imperialism had this appeal for several reasons. For many it confirmed their faith in progress and their belief in the superiority of white, Christian Europeans over the rest of the world's peoples. For ardent nationalists it was an endeavor that tested and demonstrated the nation's strength and vigor. For those who found their lives in industrial society drab and tedious, it provided vicarious adventure, excitement, and a sense of the exotic.

Late-nineteenth-century popular culture provides ample evidence of the public's enthusiasm for imperialism. Especially in Great Britain, the premier imperialist power, novels, poetry, plays, children's books, advertisements, music hall entertainment, and publications of missionary societies were filled with positive imperialist images, themes, and motifs. Youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts (f. 1908) and the Girl Guides (f. 1910) sought to inculcate the values of service to Britain's imperial cause. This constant exposure of the public to material connected with the British Empire reinforced imperialism's appeal and strengthened support for the government's expansionist policies.

The selections in this section provide several examples of how British popular culture propagated imperial values. The first group of illustrations (page 299) appeared in *An ABC for Baby Patriots* by Mrs. Earnest Ames. Designed to be read to young children, it was published in 1898 in London and went through several printings.

The second illustration (page 300) is taken from *The Kipling Reader*, a collection of stories written for young adults by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936); it was published in 1908 and illustrated by J. Macfarlane. Kipling, one of the most popular British writers of the era, is best remembered for his glorification of the British Empire and the heroism of the British soldier in India and Burma. This particular illustration depicts Scott, a character in the story "William the Conqueror." Set in India during a famine, the story centers on the romance between Scott and

(text continued on p. 300)

E,e.

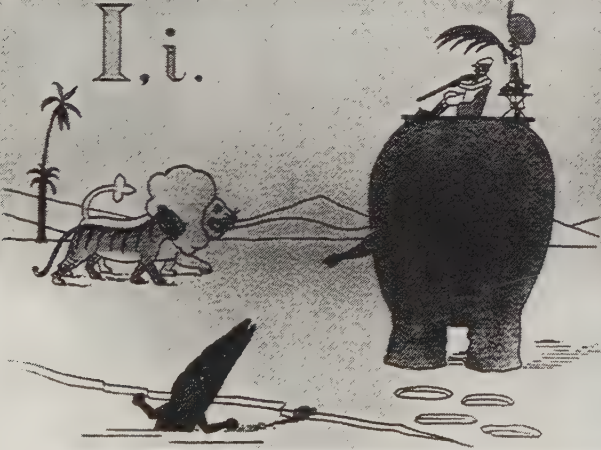


From *An ABC for Baby Patriots*

E.

E is our Empire  
Where the sun never sets;  
The larger we make it  
The bigger it gets.

I,i.



I.

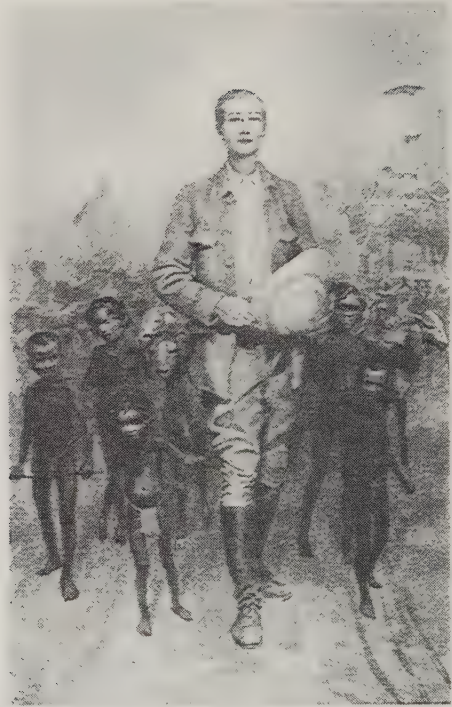
I is for India,  
Our land in the East  
Where everyone goes  
To shoot tigers and feast.

W,w.



W.

W is the Word  
Of an Englishman true;  
When given, it means  
What he says, he will do.



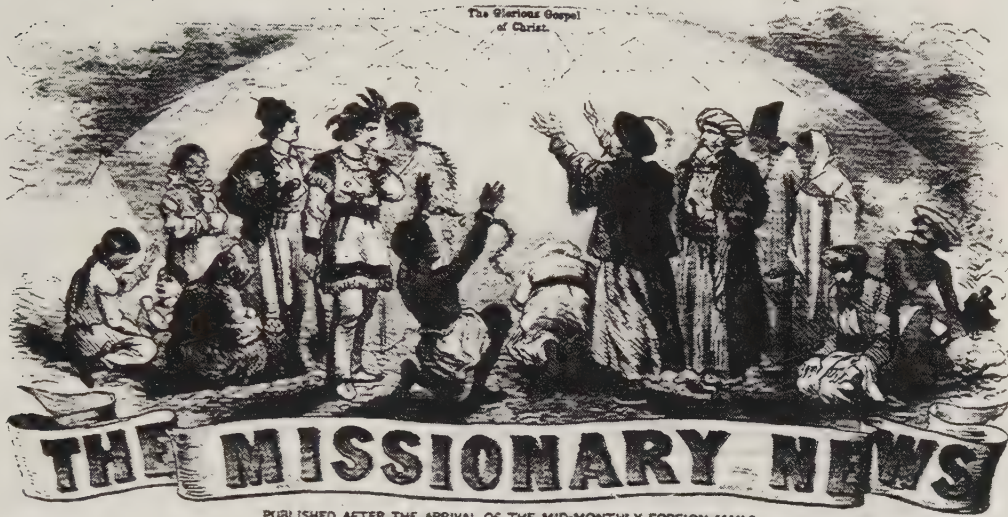
*From The Kipling Reader*

a young woman nicknamed “William” while they toil to save Indians from starvation. Scott has saved hundreds of babies by feeding them milk from a herd of goats he has managed to maintain. In this illustration he approaches William, who sees “a young man, beautiful as Paris, a god in a halo of gold dust, walking slowly at the head of his flocks, while at his knee ran small naked Cupids.”

The third illustration (page 301) is the masthead of a weekly newspaper published in 1866 by the London Missionary Society, one of a dozen major British missionary groups that supported their government’s imperialist policies.

The last illustration (page 301) is an advertisement for Lipton Teas, which appeared in 1897 in the popular weekly the *Illustrated London News*. The Lipton Company was founded in Glasgow, Scotland, by the son of a poor Irish shopkeeper, Thomas Lipton (1850–1931). He opened a small food shop in Glasgow in 1871 and by 1890 owned three hundred food stores throughout Great Britain. In 1890 the multimillionaire decided to cash in on the British taste for tea. Growing tea on plantations he owned in India and Ceylon and marketing it in inexpensive small packets that guaranteed freshness, the Lipton Company soon became synonymous with tea drinking throughout Europe and the United States. Advertisements for its tea appeared regularly in the *Illustrated London News* during the 1890s and early 1900s.





PUBLISHED AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF THE MID-MONTHLY FOREIGN MAIL.  
REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

No. 4.]

THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1866.

PRICE THREE HALFPENCE.  
[By Post Two Shillings & Sixpence per annum.]

Masthead from The Missionary News, a weekly newspaper published by the London Missionary Society

# LIPTON'S

Tea Merchant.  
BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT  
TO HER MAJESTY  
THE QUEEN.

ONE OF  
**LIPTON'S TEA-GARDENS**  
**CEYLON**

# TEAS.

FINEST THE  
WORLD CAN  
PRODUCE

1/7 PER LB.

NO HIGHER PRICE.

RICH PURE  
& FRAGRANT

1/2 and 1/4 PER LB.

LIPTON CEYLON

## LARGEST SALE IN THE WORLD

LIPTON CEYLON

Chief Offices: City Road, London.

Branches and Agencies throughout the World.

Advertisement for Lipton Teas, which appeared in the Illustrated London News, a weekly publication



### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What views of Africans and Asians are being communicated in each of the illustrations?
2. What message is being communicated about the benefits colonial subjects are accruing from their status?
3. What images are being communicated about the British in their role as imperialists?
4. What concrete examples of nationalism can you see in the various illustrations?
5. How many of the justifications for imperialism presented in Jules Ferry's speech (source 67) can you find represented in the illustrations?
6. Using evidence in the illustrations alone, what conclusions can you draw about the reasons for imperialism's popularity within the general British population?

## A Plea for Western Schools



▼ *Rammohun Roy,*

### *LETTER TO LORD AMHERST*

Rammohun Roy, the father of modern India, was born into a devout high-caste Hindu family in 1772. He showed an early genius for languages and a keen interest in religions. By the age of twenty he had learned Arabic, Persian, Greek, and Sanskrit (the ancient language of India) and had spent five years wandering through India seeking religious enlightenment. He then learned English and entered the service of the British East India Company, ultimately attaining the highest administrative rank possible for an Indian. In 1814, at the age of forty-two, he retired to Calcutta, where he established several newspapers, founded a number of schools, and campaigned to abolish the practice of widow burning, or *sati*. He also established the Society of God, dedicated to combining Christian ethical teaching with certain Hindu beliefs. He spent his final years in England, where he died in 1833.

Roy wrote the following letter in 1823 to the British governor-general of India, Lord Amherst (1773–1857), to oppose a British plan to sponsor a school in Calcutta to teach Sanskrit and Hindu literature. Roy believed that Indians should study English and receive a Western education.

In 1835 the debate over Indian education was settled when a committee appointed by the British government decided that Indian schools should offer an English-style education. In the words of the committee's chair, Thomas B. Macaulay (1800–1859), the goal was to produce young men who were "Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect."

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How would you characterize Roy's attitude toward the British? Does he seem comfortable offering the British advice? Explain your answer.
2. What does he especially admire in Western civilization?
3. What does he consider to be the weaknesses of an education based on traditional Indian learning?
4. According to Roy, what implications would a Hindu-based educational system have for India's political future?

To His Excellency the Right Honorable Lord Amherst, Governor-General in Council

My Lord,

Humbly reluctant as the natives of India are to obtrude upon the notice of government the sentiments they entertain on any public measure, there are circumstances when silence would be carrying this respectful feeling to culpable excess. The present rulers of India, coming from a distance of many thousand miles to govern a people whose language, literature, manners, customs, and ideas, are almost entirely new and strange to them, cannot easily become so intimately acquainted with their real circumstances as the natives of the country are themselves. We should therefore be guilty of a gross dereliction of duty to ourselves and afford our rulers just grounds of complaint at our apathy did we omit, on occasions of importance like the present, to supply them with such accurate information as might enable them to devise and adopt measures calculated to be beneficial to the country, and thus second by our local knowledge and experience their declared benevolent intentions for its improvement.

The establishment of a new Sanskrit School in Calcutta evinces the laudable desire of government to improve the natives of India by education — a blessing for which they must ever be grateful, and every well-wisher of the human race must be desirous that the efforts made to pro-

mote it should be guided by the most enlightened principles, so that the stream of intelligence may flow in the most useful channels.

When this seminary of learning was proposed, we understood that the government in England had ordered a considerable sum of money to be annually devoted to the instruction of its Indian subjects. We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and other useful sciences, which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world.

While we looked forward with pleasing hope to the dawn of knowledge thus promised to the rising generation, our hearts were filled with mingled feelings of delight and gratitude, we already offered up thanks to Providence for inspiring the most generous and enlightened nations of the West with the glorious ambition of planting in Asia the arts and sciences of modern Europe.

We find that the government are establishing a Sanskrit school under Hindu pandits<sup>1</sup> to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon)<sup>2</sup> can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and meta-

<sup>1</sup>Wise and learned men of Hindu India.

<sup>2</sup>The reference is to the English philosopher and prophet of

science, Francis Bacon (1561–1626). Excerpts from his *New Organon* are included in source 36.

physical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India.

The Sanskrit language, so difficult that almost a lifetime is necessary for its acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check to the diffusion of knowledge, and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labor of acquiring it. But if it were thought necessary to perpetuate this language for the sake of the portion of valuable information it contains, this might be much more easily accomplished by other means than the establishment of a new Sanskrit College; for there have been always and are now numerous professors of Sanskrit in the different parts of the country engaged in teaching this language, as well as the other branches of literature which are to be the object of the new seminary. Therefore their more diligent cultivation, if desirable, would be effectually promoted, by holding out premiums and granting certain allowances to their most eminent professors, who have already undertaken on their own account to teach them, and would by such rewards be stimulated to still greater exertion. . . .

Neither can much improvement arise from such speculations as the following which are the themes suggested by the Vedanta.<sup>3</sup> In what manner is the soul absorbed in the Deity? What relation does it bear to the Divine Essence? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of

society by the Vedantic doctrines which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence, that as father, brother, etc., have no real entity, they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better. . . .

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, with other useful sciences, which may be accomplished with the sums proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with necessary books, instruments, and other apparatus.

In presenting this subject to your Lordship, I conceive myself discharging a solemn duty which I owe to my countrymen, and also to that enlightened sovereign and legislature which have extended their benevolent care to this distant land, actuated by a desire to improve the inhabitants, and therefore humbly trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in thus expressing my sentiments to your Lordship.

I have the honor, etc.,  
Rammohun Roy

<sup>3</sup>A major school of Hindu philosophy based on the study and analysis of three ancient texts, the *Upanishads*, the *Vedanta-sutras*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. The various schools of Vedanta have different views concerning the nature of

Brahman, the relationship of the individual to Brahman, and the nature and means of liberation from the cycle of reincarnation.



## The Curse of Opium



### ▼ *Lin Zexu, LETTER TO QUEEN VICTORIA*

Although the opium poppy was grown in China and opium derivatives had been used by the Chinese in medicine for centuries, smoking opium as a narcotic dates from the seventeenth century, shortly after tobacco smoking was introduced by Spaniards and Portuguese. By the early 1800s millions of Chinese at every socioeconomic level were addicted to opium, and almost two million pounds of opium were being sold in China every year. Most of it was imported by British merchants, who in India had access to one of the world's major poppy-growing areas.

Chinese officials viewed opium addiction with increasing alarm, but until 1838 efforts to restrict the opium trade were half-hearted and ineffectual. In that year, Emperor Daoguang decided to ban the importation of opium altogether and sent one of his officials, Lin Zexu (1785–1850), to Guangzhou to implement his decree. Lin had served in the Hanlin Academy, China's leading center for Confucian studies in Beijing, and had held various provincial posts, including terms in Hubei and Hunan, where he had tried to suppress opium smoking. On arrival in Guangzhou he launched a campaign of moral persuasion and force to discourage opium smoking among Chinese and end the sale of opium by Chinese and foreign merchants. Insight into his thinking is provided by a letter he wrote to Great Britain's Queen Victoria in 1839, imploring her to halt her subjects' sale of opium.

Nothing came of his letter (which was never delivered to the queen), and the refusal of British merchants in Guangzhou to cooperate drove him to more drastic steps. He arrested the leading English opium trader and blockaded the foreign community until its merchants agreed to hand over twenty thousand chests of opium. On receiving the opium, he then had it mixed with water, salt, and lime and flushed into the sea. In response, the British government dispatched a fleet and mobilized Indian troops to protect British interests in China. While the flotilla of almost fifty vessels was on its way to China in late 1839, fighting between the Chinese and the English had already started around Guangzhou; the Opium War was under way.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Lin, what is the role of the Chinese emperor, and how does it affect his dealings with Queen Victoria?
2. What differences does Lin see in the motives of Chinese and Europeans in regard to trade?
3. What moral arguments does Lin use to persuade Victoria to order the end of opium trading? What other arguments does he use?
4. What seems to be Lin's understanding of the powers of Victoria as queen of England?
5. How does Lin's view of the outside world differ from that of Emperor Qianlong (source 56)?

His Majesty the Emperor comforts and cherishes foreigners as well as Chinese: he loves all the people in the world without discrimination. Whenever profit is found, he wishes to share it with all men; whenever harm appears, he likewise will eliminate it on behalf of all of mankind. His heart is in fact the heart of the whole universe.

Generally speaking, the succeeding rulers of your honorable country have been respectful and obedient. Time and again they have sent petitions to China, saying: "We are grateful to His Majesty the Emperor for the impartial and favorable treatment he has granted to the citizens of my country who have come to China to trade," etc. I am pleased to learn that you, as the ruler of your honorable country, are thoroughly familiar with the principle of righteousness and are grateful for the favor that His Majesty the Emperor has bestowed upon your subjects. Because of this fact, the Celestial Empire, following its traditional policy of treating foreigners with kindness, has been doubly considerate towards the people from England. You have traded in China for almost 200 years, and as a result, your country has become wealthy and prosperous.

As this trade has lasted for a long time, there are bound to be unscrupulous as well as honest traders. Among the unscrupulous are those who bring opium to China to harm the Chinese; they succeed so well that this poison has spread far and wide in all the provinces. You, I hope, will certainly agree that people who pursue material gains to the great detriment of the welfare of others can be neither tolerated by Heaven nor endured by men. . . .

Your country is more than 60,000 *li*<sup>1</sup> from China. The purpose of your ships in coming to China is to realize a large profit. Since this profit is realized in China and is in fact taken away from the Chinese people, how can foreigners re-

turn injury for the benefit they have received by sending this poison to harm their benefactors? They may not intend to harm others on purpose, but the fact remains that they are so obsessed with material gain that they have no concern whatever for the harm they can cause to others. Have they no conscience? I have heard that you strictly prohibit opium in your own country, indicating unmistakably that you know how harmful opium is.<sup>2</sup> You do not wish opium to harm your own country, but you choose to bring that harm to other countries such as China. Why?

The products that originate from China are all useful items. They are good for food and other purposes and are easy to sell. Has China produced one item that is harmful to foreign countries? For instance, tea and rhubarb<sup>3</sup> are so important to foreigners' livelihood that they have to consume them every day. Were China to concern herself only with her own advantage without showing any regard for other people's welfare, how could foreigners continue to live? Foreign products like woolen cloth and beiges<sup>4</sup> rely on Chinese raw materials such as silk for their manufacturing. Had China sought only her own advantage, where would the foreigners' profit come from? The products that foreign countries need and have to import from China are too numerous to enumerate: from food products such as molasses, ginger, and cassia<sup>5</sup> to useful necessities such as silk and porcelain. The imported goods from foreign countries, on the other hand, are merely playthings which can be easily dispensed with without causing any ill effect. Since we do not need these things really, what harm would come if we should decide to stop foreign trade altogether? The reason why we unhesitatingly allow foreigners to ship out such Chinese products as tea and silk is that we feel that wherever there is an advantage, it should be shared by all the people in the world. . . .

<sup>1</sup>A Chinese measurement of distance, approximately one-third of a mile.

<sup>2</sup>Actually, the use of opium was not prohibited in England when Lin wrote his letter.

<sup>3</sup>Rhubarb roots were used in medicines.

<sup>4</sup>A soft wool fabric unbleached and undyed, thus having a tan color.

<sup>5</sup>A spice similar to cinnamon.

I have heard that you are a kind, compassionate monarch. I am sure that you will not do to others what you yourself do not desire. I have also heard that you have instructed every British ship that sails for Guangzhou not to bring any prohibited goods to China. It seems that your policy is as enlightened as it is proper. The fact that British ships have continued to bring opium to China results perhaps from the impossibility of making a thorough inspection of all of them owing to their large numbers. I am sending you this letter to reiterate the seriousness with which we enforce the law of the Celestial Empire and to make sure that merchants from your honorable country will not attempt to violate it again.

I have heard that the areas under your direct jurisdiction such as London, Scotland, and Ireland do not produce opium; it is produced instead in your Indian possessions such as Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Patna, and Malwa. In these possessions the English people not only plant opium poppies that stretch from one mountain to another but also open factories to manufacture this terrible drug. As months accumulate and years pass by, the poison they have produced increases in its wicked intensity, and its repugnant odor reaches as high as the sky. Heaven is furious with anger, and all the gods are moaning with pain! It is hereby suggested that you destroy and plow under all of these opium plants and grow food crops instead, while issuing an order to punish severely anyone who dares to plant opium poppies again. If you adopt this policy of love so as to produce good and exterminate evil, Heaven will protect you, and gods will bring you good fortune. Moreover, you will enjoy a long life and be rewarded with a multitude of children and grandchildren! In short, by taking this one measure, you can bring great happiness to others as well as yourself. Why do you not do it?

The right of foreigners to reside in China is a special favor granted by the Celestial Empire, and the profits they have made are those realized in China. As time passes by, some of them stay

in China for a longer period than they do in their own country. For every government, past or present, one of its primary functions is to educate all the people living within its jurisdiction, foreigners as well as its own citizens, about the law and to punish them if they choose to violate it. Since a foreigner who goes to England to trade has to obey the English law, how can an Englishman not obey the Chinese law when he is physically within China? The present law calls for the imposition of the death sentence on any Chinese who has peddled or smoked opium. Since a Chinese could not peddle or smoke opium if foreigners had not brought it to China, it is clear that the true culprits of a Chinese's death as a result of an opium conviction are the opium traders from foreign countries. Being the cause of other people's death, why should they themselves be spared from capital punishment? A murderer of one person is subject to the death sentence; just imagine how many people opium has killed! This is the rationale behind the new law which says that any foreigner who brings opium to China will be sentenced to death by hanging or beheading. Our purpose is to eliminate this poison once and for all and to the benefit of all mankind.

Our Celestial Empire towers over all other countries in virtue and possesses a power great and awesome enough to carry out its wishes. But we will not prosecute a person without warning him in advance; that is why we have made our law explicit and clear. If the merchants of your honorable country wish to enjoy trade with us on a permanent basis, they must fearfully observe our law by cutting off, once and for all, the supply of opium. Under no circumstance should they test our intention to enforce the law by deliberately violating it. You, as the ruler of your honorable country, should do your part to uncover the hidden and unmask the wicked. It is hoped that you will continue to enjoy your country and become more and more respectful and obeisant. How wonderful it is that we can all enjoy the blessing of peace!





## Ottoman Reforms in the Tanzimat Era



### ▼ *Sultan Abdul Mejid, IMPERIAL RESCRIPT*

Serious efforts to reverse the Ottoman Empire's political and military decline can be traced back to the reign of Selim III (r. 1789–1807), who sought to revitalize the Ottoman army by importing foreign officers, updating weapons, and tightening discipline. These modest reforms were bitterly opposed by many Islamic religious leaders and by the janissaries, once the elite of the Ottoman army, but now mainly concerned with protecting their privileges. As a result, Selim was deposed in 1807 and then murdered. Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) achieved more permanent military and administrative reforms, largely because of his destruction of the reactionary janissary corps in 1826 and his success in weakening some of the authority of conservative Islamic judges. Despite his efforts, his armies were badly defeated when he sent them into battle against the forces of the Egyptian pasha Muhammad Ali in 1832 and 1839. Yet another era of reform began during the reign of Abdul Mejid (r. 1839–1861). Inspired by the sultan's foreign minister and later grand vizier, Mustafa Reshid, it came to be known as the era of *Tanzimat*, which literally means restructuring. This movement, which maintained its momentum until early in the reign of Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909), sought to save the empire by administrative reform, expansion of education, and the adoption of Western legal concepts and practices.

Two of the most important documents in the Tanzimat Era were proclamations issued by Sultan Abdul Mejid (r. 1839–1861). The first, known as the Noble Rescript, was issued shortly after he became sultan in 1839. In it he committed himself to ending government corruption, confirming the rights of non-Muslims, and protecting all subjects from arbitrary arrest. Seventeen years later, in 1856, he made a second, broader statement, known as the Imperial Rescript. This represented the high point of efforts to reform the Ottoman Empire while maintaining its authoritarian government and traditional mix of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish subjects.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What benefits were the emperor's non-Muslim subjects to receive as a result of this proclamation?
2. What efforts were to be made to improve the empire's system of justice?
3. What do the decrees dealing with the economy suggest about the state of the empire's economic situation?
4. To what extent does this document extend meaningful political rights to the emperor's subjects?
5. In what respects does this document reflect Western liberal ideals of individual freedom and religious toleration?

Let it be done as herein set forth. . . . It being now my desire to renew and enlarge still more the new Institutions ordained with the view of establishing a state of things conformable with the dignity of my Empire and — . . . by the kind and friendly assistance of the Great Powers, my noble Allies,<sup>1</sup> . . . The guarantees promised on our part by the Hatti-Humaïoun of Gülhané,<sup>2</sup> and in conformity with the Tanzimat, . . . are today confirmed and consolidated, and efficacious measures shall be taken in order that they may have their full and entire effect.

All the privileges and spiritual immunities granted by my ancestors from time immemorial, and at subsequent dates, to all Christian communities or other non-Muslim persuasions established in my empire, under my protection, shall be confirmed and maintained.

Every Christian or other non-Muslim community shall be bound within a fixed period, and with the concurrence of a commission composed . . . of members of its own body, to proceed with my high approbation and under the inspection of my Sublime Porte,<sup>3</sup> to examine into its actual immunities and privileges, and to discuss and submit to my Sublime Porte the reforms required by the progress of civilization and of the age. The powers conceded to the Christian Patriarchs and Bishops<sup>4</sup> by the Sultan Mehmed II<sup>5</sup> and his successors, shall be made to harmonize with the new position which my generous and beneficent intentions ensure to these communities. . . . The principles of nominating the Patriarchs for life, after the revision of the rules of election now in force, shall be exactly carried out. . . . The ecclesiastical dues, of whatever sort of nature they be, shall be abolished and replaced by fixed revenues of the Patriarchs and heads of communities. . . . In the towns, small boroughs, and villages, where the whole population is of the same religion, no

obstacle shall be offered to the repair, according to their original plan, of buildings set apart for religious worship, for schools, for hospitals, and for cemeteries. . . .

Every distinction or designation tending to make any class whatever of the subjects of my Empire inferior to another class, on account of their religion, language, or race, shall be forever effaced from Administrative Protocol. The laws shall be put in force against the use of any injurious or offensive term, either among private individuals or on the part of the authorities. . . .

As all forms of religion are and shall be freely professed in my dominions, no subject of my Empire shall be hindered in the exercise of the religion that he professes. . . . No one shall be compelled to change their religion . . . and . . . all the subjects of my Empire, without distinction of nationality, shall be admissible to public employments. . . . All the subjects of my Empire, without distinction, shall be received into the civil and military schools of the government. . . . Moreover, every community is authorized to establish public schools of science, art, and industry. . . .

All commercial, correctional, and criminal suits between Muslims and Christian or other non-Muslim subjects, or between Christian or other non-Muslims of different sects, shall be referred to Mixed Tribunals. The proceedings of these Tribunals shall be public; the parties shall be confronted, and shall produce their witnesses, whose testimony shall be received, without distinction, upon an oath taken according to the religious law of each sect. . . .

Penal, correctional, and commercial laws, and rules of procedure for the Mixed Tribunals, shall be drawn up as soon as possible, and formed into a code. . . . Proceedings shall be taken, for the reform of the penitentiary system. . . .

<sup>1</sup>During the Crimean War (1853–1856) Turkey was allied with Great Britain and France against Russia. France and Great Britain at the time were encouraging Turkish military reform to offset the power of Russia in the region.

<sup>2</sup>This refers to the Noble Rescript of 1839.

<sup>3</sup>"Sublime Porte" refers to the building that housed the grand vizier and other high officials of the Ottoman state.

It is a translation of the Turkish words *Bab-i Ali*, or "high gate." The term is used to refer to Ottoman leadership in much the same way that the "White House" refers to the American presidency.

<sup>4</sup>The reference is to ruling officials of the Greek and Armenian churches in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>5</sup>Ottoman ruler from 1451 to 1481.

The organization of the police . . . shall be revised in such a manner as to give to all the peaceable subjects of my Empire the strongest guarantees for the safety both of their persons and property. . . . Christian subjects, and those of other non-Muslim sects, . . . shall, as well as Muslims, be subject to the obligations of the Law of Recruitment. The principle of obtaining substitutes, or of purchasing exemption, shall be admitted.

Proceedings shall be taken for a reform in the constitution of the Provincial and Communal Councils, in order to ensure fairness in the choice of the deputies of the Muslim, Christian, and other communities, and freedom of voting in the Councils. . . .

As the laws regulating the purchase, sale, and disposal of real property are common to all the subjects of my Empire, it shall be lawful for foreigners to possess landed property in my dominions. . . .

The taxes are to be levied under the same denomination from all the subjects of my Empire, without distinction of class or of religion. The most prompt and energetic means for remedying the abuses in collecting the taxes, and especially the tithes, shall be considered. The system

of direct collection shall gradually, and as soon as possible, be substituted for the plan of farming,<sup>6</sup> in all the branches of the revenues of the state.

A special law having been already passed, which declares that the budget of the revenue and the expenditure of the state shall be drawn up and made known every year, the said law shall be most scrupulously observed. . . .

The heads of each community and a delegate, designated by my Sublime Porte, shall be summoned to take part in the deliberations of the Supreme Council of Justice on all occasions which might interest the generality of the subjects of my Empire. . . .

Steps shall be taken for the formation of banks and other similar institutions, so as to effect a reform in the monetary and financial system, as well as to create funds to be employed in augmenting the sources of the material wealth of my empire.

Everything that can impede commerce or agriculture shall be abolished. To accomplish these objects means shall be sought to profit by science, the art, and the funds of Europe, and thus gradually to execute them.

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<sup>6</sup>Tax farming, in which the government contracted with private financiers, who collected taxes for a profit.





## The Social Ills of Tokugawa Japan



### ▼ *Honda Toshiaki,* *A SECRET PLAN OF GOVERNMENT*

Honda Toshiaki, born in northern Japan in 1721, was a perceptive critic of late Tokugawa society and a prophet of Japan's future. After studying and teaching mathematics, astronomy, and fencing in Edo, he devoted most of his life to observing and analyzing the state of contemporary Japan. In his travels he was particularly interested in observing conditions among the poor and learning the reasons for their misery. He concluded that as a small island nation, Japan needed to expand its commerce and colonize, rather than concentrate on agriculture, as a large continental country like China could do. In his view Japan's seclusion policy should be abandoned and efforts made to teach the Japanese modern navigation and weaponry. Honda publicized his ideas to students and correspondents, but his influence on Japan's political leaders came only after his death. His only government service was as advisor to the lord of Kaga, a minor daimyo. In 1821 he died in Edo.

Honda's *A Secret Plan for Government*, written in 1798, is his most important work. In it he elaborates an economic and political plan for Japan based on what

he called the “four imperative needs” — to learn the effective use of gunpowder, to develop metallurgy, to increase trade, and to colonize both nearby islands and distant lands. The following excerpt comes at the end of a long discourse on Japanese history in which Honda analyzes the roots of Japan’s problems.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is Honda’s view of the daimyo? How does it compare to Mitsui’s views of the daimyo?
2. How do merchants contribute to Japan’s problems, according to Honda?
3. How does Honda justify his assertion that fifteen-sixteenths of all Japanese rice production goes to the merchants? Are his arguments plausible?
4. Why is Europe rather than China the better model for Japan’s revival, according to Honda?
5. What Confucian influence is evident in Honda’s *Plan*? In what ways does Honda reject Confucianism?

Not until Tokugawa Ieyasu used his power to control the strong and give succor to the weak did the warfare that had lasted for three hundred years without a halt suddenly abate. Arrows were left in their quivers and spears in their racks. If now, in a time of peace, the country were ruled in accordance with the four imperative needs, the prices of all commodities would be stabilized, and the discontent of the people would thus be cut off at the root. This is the true method of establishing a permanent foundation for the nation, so that the people will become honest in their hearts and cultivate orderly ways even if they are not governed. It must have been because he realized how difficult it would be to preserve the empire for all ages to come if the people were not honest in their hearts that Ieyasu, in his testament, exhorted shoguns who would succeed him to abstain from any irregularities in government, and to rule on a basis of benevolence and honesty. It was his counsel that the shoguns should serve as models to the people, and by their

honesty train the people in the ways of humanity and justice. He taught that the shogun should not compel obedience merely by the use of force, but by his acts of benevolence should keep the nation at peace. . . .

He taught the daimyo that the duties of a governor consisted in the careful attempt to guide the people of their domains in such a way as both to bring about the prosperity of the land and to encourage the literary and military arts.

However, in recent days there has been the spectacle of lords confiscating the allocated property of their retainers on the pretext of paying back debts to the merchants. The debts do not then decrease, but usually seem rather to grow larger. One daimyo with an income of 60,000 *koku*<sup>1</sup> so increased his borrowings that he could not make good his debts, and there was a public suit. The court judgment in the case was said to have been over 1,180,000 *ryo*.<sup>2</sup> Even if repayment had been attempted on the basis of his income of 60,000 *koku*, the debt would not have

<sup>1</sup>A *koku* is approximately five bushels of rice and was used to measure daimyo income.

<sup>2</sup>A measurement of the weight of gold.

been completely settled for fifty or sixty years, so long a time that it is difficult to imagine the day would actually come.

All the daimyo are not in this position, but there is not one who has not borrowed from the merchants. Is this not a sad state of affairs? The merchant, watching this spectacle, must feel like a fisherman who sees a fish swim into his net. Officials of the daimyo harass the farmers for money, which they claim they need to repay the daimyo's debts, but the debts do not diminish. Instead, the daimyo go on contracting new ones year after year. The officials are blamed for this situation, and are dismissed as incompetent. New officials then harass and afflict the farmers in much the same way as the old ones, and so it goes on. However talented the officials may be, they become disgusted and abandon the effort. Some pretend sickness and remain in their homes; others are indiscreet and die young.

No matter how hard the daimyo and their officials rack their brains, they do not seem to be able to reduce the debts. The lords are "sunk in a pool of debts," as it is popularly said, a pool from which their children and grandchildren will be unable to escape. Everything will be as the merchants wish it. The daimyo turn over their domains to the merchants, receiving in return an allowance with which to pay their public and private expenses. Such daimyo give no thought at all to Heaven, to fulfilling their duties as samurai, or to the proper way of looking after the farmers.

Many fields have turned into wasteland since the famine of 1783, when thousands of farmers starved to death. Wherever one goes . . . , one hears people say, "There used to be a village here. . . . The land over there was once part of such-and-such a county, but now there is no village and no revenue comes from the land." . . . When so many farmers starved, reducing still further their already insufficient numbers, the amount of uncultivated land greatly increased. If the wicked practice of infanticide, now so prevalent, is not stopped, the farming population will dwindle until it tends to die out alto-

gether. Generous protective and relief measures must be put into effect immediately if this evil practice is to be stamped out.

A wise ruler could end this practice in short order and create an atmosphere favorable to the prosperity of the nation by establishing a system based on generosity and compassion. When a woman of one of the lower classes becomes pregnant, a government agent should be sent to investigate the situation. The mother of the child should then be given two sacks of rice each year from the month the child is born until he is ten years old. The practice of infanticide would soon stop. Thus by spending a mere twenty sacks of rice over a period of ten years, the country would at the same time gain a good farmer and atone for the misery caused in the past. . . .

The Confucian scholars of ancient and modern times have talked a great deal about benevolence and compassion, but they possess neither in their hearts. Officials and authorities talk about benevolent government, but they have no understanding of what that means. Whose fault is it that the farmers are dying of starvation and that good fields are turning into wasteland? The fault lies entirely with the ruler. . . .

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▷ There follows an enthusiastic but often inaccurate account of Europe's accomplishments.

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Because astronomy, calendar making, and mathematics are considered the ruler's business, the European kings are well versed in celestial and terrestrial principles, and instruct the common people in them. Thus even among the lower classes one finds men who show great ability in their particular fields. The Europeans as a result have been able to establish industries with which the rest of the world is unfamiliar. It is for this reason that all the treasures of the world are said to be attracted to Europe. There is nowhere the Europeans' ships do not go in order to obtain the different products and treasures of the world. They trade their own rare products, superior



implements, and unusual inventions for the precious metals and valuable goods of others, which they bring back to enrich their own countries. Their prosperity makes them strong, and it is because of their strength that they are never invaded or pillaged, whereas for their part they have invaded countless non-European countries. . . .

There is no place in the world to compare with Europe. It may be wondered in what way this supremacy was achieved. In the first place, the European nations have behind them a history of five to six thousand years. In this period they have delved deep into the beauties of the arts, have divined the foundations of government, and have established a system based on a thorough examination of the factors that naturally make a nation prosperous. Because of their proficiency in mathematics, they have excelled also in astronomy, calendar making, and surveying. They have elaborated laws of navigation such that there is nothing simpler for them than to sail the oceans of the world. . . .

In spite of this example, however, the Japanese do not look elsewhere than to China for good or beautiful things, so tainted are the customs and temperament of Japan by Chinese teachings. Japanese are therefore unaware of such things as the four imperative needs, since they do not figure in the teachings of the Chinese sages.

China is a mountainous country that extends as far as Europe and Africa. It is bounded by the ocean to the south, but water communication within the country is not feasible. Since it is impossible to feed the huge population of cities when transport can be effected only by human or animal strength, there are no big cities in China away from the coast. China is therefore a much less favored country than Japan, which is surrounded by water, and this factor shows in the deficiencies and faults of Chinese state policies. China does not merit being used as a model. Since Japan is a maritime nation, shipping and

trade should be the chief concerns of the ruler. Ships should be sent to all countries to obtain products needed for national consumption and to bring precious metals to Japan. A maritime nation is equipped with the means to increase her national strength.

By contrast, a nation that attempts to get along on its own resources will grow steadily weaker. . . . To put the matter more bluntly, the policies followed by the various ruling families until now have determined that the lower classes must lead a hand-to-mouth existence. The best part of the harvests of the farmers who live on the domains of the empire is wrenched away from them. The lords spend all they take within the same year, and if they then do not have enough, they oppress the farmers all the more cruelly in an effort to obtain additional funds. This goes on year after year. . . .

It is a great shame that such conditions prevail, but it is said that "even the thoughts of an ant may reach up to Heaven." Though their conditions differ, the highest and the lowest alike are human beings, and the rulers ought to think about those who are less fortunate than themselves. Soon all the gold and silver currency will pass into the hands of the merchants, and only merchants will be deserving of the epithets "rich" and "mighty." Their power will thus grow until they stand first among the four classes. When I investigated the incomes of present-day merchants, I discovered that fifteen-sixteenths of the total income of Japan goes to the merchants, with only one-sixteenth left for the samurai. As proof of this statement, I cite the following case. When there are good rice harvests at Yonezawa in Dewa or in Semboku-gun in Akita<sup>3</sup> the price is five or six *mon* for one *sho*.<sup>4</sup> The rice is sold to merchants who ship it to Edo, where the price is about 100 *mon*, regardless of the original cost. At this rate, if one bought 10,000 *ryos* worth of rice in Dewa, sent it to Edo, and sold it there, one's capital would be increased to 160,000 *ryo*. If the

<sup>3</sup>Dewa and Akita are provinces in northern Honshu.

<sup>4</sup>A *mon* was a copper coin; a *sho* was about 3.2 pints.



160,000 ryo in turn were used as capital, the return in Edo would be 2,560,000 ryo. With only two exchanges of trade it is possible to make enormous profits.

It may be claimed that of this sum part must go for shipping expenses and pack-horse charges, but the fact remains that one gets back sixteen times what one has paid for the rice. It is thus apparent that fifteen-sixteenths of the nation's income goes to the merchants. In terms of the production of an individual farmer, out of thirty days a month he works twenty-eight for the merchants and two for the samurai; or, out of 360 days in a year, he works 337  $\frac{1}{2}$  for the merchants and 22  $\frac{1}{2}$  for the samurai. Clearly, then, unless the samurai store grain it is impossible for them to offer any relief to the farmers in years of famine. This may be why they can do no more than look on when the farmers are dying of starva-

tion. And all this because the right system has not been established. It is a most lamentable state of affairs that the farmers have to shoulder the weight of this error and die of starvation as inevitably as "water collecting in a hollow."

By means of the plans outlined in the account of the four imperative needs . . . the present corrupt and jejune society could be restored to its former prosperity and strength. The ancient glories of the warrior-nation of Japan would be revived. Colonization projects would gradually be commenced and would meet with great success. A capital city would be built . . . for northern Japan. The central capital would be at Edo, and the southern one at Osaka. The capital of the entire nation would alternate among these three locations. Then, under enlightened government, Japan could certainly be made the richest and strongest country in the world.

## Middle-Class Success and How to Achieve It



### ▼ Samuel Smiles, *SELF-HELP and THRIFT*

No writer expressed the hopes, fears, expectations, and values of nineteenth-century Europe's middle class more faithfully and successfully than the Scottish biographer, essayist, and businessman, Samuel Smiles (1812–1904). Born into the family of a papermaker and shopkeeper, Smiles received a medical degree, worked as a journalist in Leeds, and held several managerial posts in the railroad industry. He wrote biographies, histories, and travel narratives, but achieved worldwide fame through his inspirational books on morality and personal behavior. After it had been rejected by six publishers, his book *Self-Help* (1859) became a bestseller that in the nineteenth century went through dozens of editions and was translated into seventeen languages, including Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. With an upbeat message that hard work, discipline, and high moral standards guaranteed success, *Self-Help* was followed by *Character* (1871), *Thrift* (1875), and *Duty* (1880). With his life spanning the century that saw the triumph of the middle-class values he championed, he died in 1904 at the age of ninety-three.

In the following excerpt, the first two sections, “Self-Help and Individualism” and “Habits of Successful Men,” are from *Self-Help*, and the third section, “Faults of the Poor,” is from *Thrift*.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why does Smiles consider government incapable of solving the social and economic problems confronting early industrial England? In his view what should be government's proper role and function?
2. What definition would Smiles offer for the word “individualism”?
3. How would you define the “middle-class ethic” discussed by Smiles? What are its components?
4. According to Smiles, who is responsible for the widespread poverty in England? In his view, what can be done about it?
5. If given a chance to testify before one of the parliamentary committees about the effects of industrialization on the working class, what might Smiles have said?
6. How do Smiles's views resemble and differ from those of Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*? (See source 40.)

## SELF-HELP AND INDIVIDUALISM

"Heaven helps those who help themselves" is a well-tryed maxim, embodying in a small compass the results of vast human experience. The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigor and strength. . . . Whatever is done *for* men or classes, to a certain extent takes away the stimulus and necessity of doing for themselves; and where men are subjected to over-guidance and over-government, the inevitable tendency is to render them comparatively helpless.

Even the best institutions can give a man no active help. Perhaps the most they can do is, to leave him free to develop himself and improve his individual condition. But in all times men have been prone to believe that their happiness and well-being were to be secured by means of institutions rather than by their own conduct. Hence the value of legislation as an agent in human advancement has usually been much over-estimated. . . . Moreover, it is every day becoming more clearly understood, that the function of Government is negative and restrictive, rather than positive and active; being resolvable principally into protection — protection of life, liberty, and property. Laws, wisely administered, will secure men in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labor, whether of mind or body, at a comparatively small personal sacrifice; but no laws, however stringent, can make the idle industrious, the thriftless provident, or the drunken sober. Such reforms can only be effected by means of individual action, economy, and self-denial; by better habits, rather than by greater rights. . . .

National progress is the sum of individual industry, energy, and uprightness, as national decay is of individual idleness, selfishness, and vice. What we are accustomed to decry as great social evils, will for the most part be found to be but the outgrowth of man's own perverted life; and though we may endeavor to cut them down and extirpate them by means of Law, they will only spring up again with fresh luxuriance in some other form unless the conditions of personal life

and character are radically improved. If this view be correct, then it follows that the highest patriotism and philanthropy consist, not so much in altering laws and modifying institutions as in helping and stimulating men to elevate and improve themselves by their own free and independent individual action.

## HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL MEN

Practical industry, wisely and vigorously applied, always produces its due effects. It carries a man onward, brings out his individual character, and stimulates the action of others. All may not rise equally, yet each, on the whole, very much according to his deserts. . . .

On the whole, it is not good that human nature should have the road of life made too easy. Better to be under the necessity of working hard and faring meanly, than to have every thing done ready to our hand and a pillow of down to repose upon. Indeed, to start in life with comparatively small means seems so necessary as a stimulus to work, that it may almost be set down as one of the conditions essential to success in life. Hence, an eminent judge, when asked what contributed most to success at the bar, replied, "Some succeed by great talent, some by high connections, some by miracle, but the majority by commencing without a shilling."

The necessity of labor may, indeed, be regarded as the main root and spring of all that we call progress in individuals, and civilization in nations; and it is doubtful that any heavier curse could be imposed on a man than the gratification of all his wishes without effort on his part, leaving nothing for his hopes, desires, or struggles. . . .

Attention, application, accuracy, method, punctuality, and dispatch are the principal qualities required for the efficient conduct of business of any sort. . . . They are little things, it is true; but human life is made up of comparative trifles. It is the repetition of little acts which constitutes not only the sum of human character, but which determines the character of



nations. And where men or nations have broken down, it will almost invariably be found that neglect of little things was the rock on which they split. Every human being has duties to be performed, and, therefore, has need of cultivating the capacity for doing them; whether the sphere of action be the management of a household, the conduct of a trade or profession, or the government of a nation. . . .

Men of business are accustomed to quote the maxim that Time is money; but it is more; the proper improvement of it is self-culture, self-improvement, and growth of character. An hour wasted daily on trifles or in indolence, would, if devoted to self-improvements, make an ignorant man wise in a few years, and, employed in good works, would make his life fruitful, and death a harvest of worthy deeds. Fifteen minutes a day devoted to self-improvement, will be felt at the end of the year.

## FAULTS OF THE POOR

England is one of the richest countries in the world. Our merchants are enterprising, our manufacturers are industrious, our labourers are hard-working. There is an accumulation of wealth in the country to which past times can offer no parallel. The Bank<sup>1</sup> is gorged with gold. There never was more food in the empire; there never was more money. There is no end to our manufacturing productions, for the steam-engine never tires. And yet, notwithstanding all this wealth, there is an enormous mass of poverty. Close alongside the Wealth of Nations, there gloomily stalks the Misery of Nations, — luxurious ease resting upon a dark background of wretchedness.

Parliamentary reports have again and again revealed to us the miseries endured by certain portions of our working population. They have described the people employed in factories, workshops, mines, and brickfields, as well as in the pursuits of country life. We have tried to grapple

with the evils of their condition by legislation, but it seems to mock us. Those who sink into poverty are fed, but they remain paupers. Those who feed them, feel no compassion; and those who are fed, return no gratitude. . . . Thus the Haves and the Have-nots, the opulent and the indigent, stand at the two extremes of the social scale, and a wide gulf is fixed between them. . . .

With respect to the poorer classes, — what has become of them in the midst of our so-called civilization? An immense proportion of them remain entirely uncivilized. . . .

They work, eat, drink, and sleep: that constitutes their life. They think nothing of providing for tomorrow, or for next week, or for next year. They abandon themselves to their sensual appetites; and make no provision whatever for the future. The thought of adversity, or of coming sorrow, or of the helplessness that comes with years and sickness, never crosses their minds. In these respects, they resemble the savage tribes, who know no better, and do no worse. Like the North American Indians, they debase themselves by the vices which accompany civilization, but make no use whatever of its benefits and advantages. . . .

No one can reproach the English workman with want of industry. He works harder and more skilfully than the workman of any other country; and he might be more comfortable and independent in his circumstances, were he as prudent as he is laborious. . . . In prosperous times they are not accustomed to make provision for adverse times; and when a period of social pressure occurs, they are rarely found more than a few weeks ahead of positive want.

Hence, the skilled workman, unless trained in good habits, may exhibit no higher a life than that of the mere animal; and the earning of increased wages will only furnish him with increased means for indulging in the gratification of his grosser appetites. . . .

This habitual improvidence — though of course there are many admirable exceptions —

<sup>1</sup>The Bank of England, England's central bank.



is the real cause of the social degradation of the artisan. This too is the prolific source of social misery. But the misery is entirely the result of human ignorance and self-indulgence. For though the Creator has ordained poverty, the poor are not necessarily, nor as a matter of fact, the miserable. Misery is the result of moral causes, — most commonly of individual vice and improvidence. . . .

Complaining that the laws are bad, and that the taxes are heavy, will not mend matters. Aristocratic government, and the tyranny of masters, are nothing like so injurious as the tyranny of vicious appetites. Men are easily led away by the parade of their miseries, which are for the most part voluntary and self-imposed, — the results of idleness, thriftlessness, intemperance, and misconduct. To blame others for what we suffer, is always more agreeable to our self-pride, than to blame ourselves. But it is perfectly clear that people who live from day to day without plan, without rule, without forethought — who spend all their earnings, without saving anything for the future — are preparing beforehand for inevitable distress. To provide only for the present, is the sure means of sacrificing the future. What

hope can there be for a people whose only maxim seems to be, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"?

All this may seem very hopeless; yet it is not entirely so. The large earnings of the working classes is an important point to start with. The gradual diffusion of education will help them to use, and not abuse, their means of comfortable living. The more extended knowledge of the uses of economy, frugality, and thrift, will help them to spend their lives more soberly, virtuously, and religiously. . . . Social improvement is always very slow. . . . It requires the lapse of generations before its effect can be so much as discerned; for a generation is but as a day in the history of civilization. . . . From the days in which our British progenitors rushed to battle in their war-paint, — or those more recent times when the whole of the labouring people were villeins and serfs, bought and sold with the soil which they tilled, — to the times in which we now live, — how wide the difference, how gratifying the contrast. Surely it ought not to be so difficult to put an end to the Satanic influences of thriftlessness, drunkenness, and improvidence!

## The Marxist Critique of Industrial Capitalism



### ▼ *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,* *THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO*

As factories, steam engines, and railroads transformed Europe's economy in the first half of the nineteenth century, industrialization brought fundamental changes to European society, transformed politics, and sparked animated discussion and debate among intellectuals. Journalists, politicians, academics, factory owners, social reformers, and clergy examined workers' grievances, explored the moral dimensions of capitalism, and debated what industrialization meant for Europe's future. Out of this ferment of ideas a potent new ideology, socialism, emerged.

Although Karl Marx (1818–1883) is by far the most important figure in the history of socialism, he was not the movement's founder. Europe's first socialists were visionaries and idealists such as Count Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), and Etienne Cabet (1788–1856), whose dreams of

reordering European society on the basis of equality, cooperation, and justice lacked philosophical rigor and political savvy. Marx, the son of a German lawyer and a graduate of the University of Berlin, where he studied philosophy, shared these thinkers' moral outrage over the poverty and cutthroat competition fostered by the early Industrial Revolution. But he found their ideas too unrealistic — too “utopian” — and set for himself the task of utilizing history, economics, and science to provide the intellectual foundations of *scientific socialism*, capable of describing the mechanisms by which socialism would ultimately replace capitalism.

Among Marx's many writings, none rivals the importance of *The Communist Manifesto*, which he published in 1848 with his coauthor Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). Marx met Engels, an ardent critic of capitalism despite the fortune he built from managing a textile mill in Manchester, England, in Paris in 1844 after Marx had been exiled from Germany because of his radical editorials in a Cologne newspaper. In 1847, they both joined the Communist League, a revolutionary society dominated by German political exiles in France and England. They wrote the *Manifesto* to publicize the League's program. After 1848, the two men remained friends, with Engels giving the impoverished Marx enough money to continue his writing and political activities while living in London. Both men continued to write on behalf of socialism, but Marx's works, especially his masterpiece, *Das Kapital* (*Capitalism*), assumed the far greater role in shaping modern socialist thought. Furthermore, Marx's views of history, human behavior, and social conflict have influenced not just politics but also philosophy, religion, literature, and all the social sciences.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How do Marx and Engels define class, and what do they mean by the “class struggle”?
2. According to Marx and Engels, how is the class struggle in nineteenth-century Europe unique?
3. In their view, what characterizes the bourgeoisie?
4. Marx and Engels believe that bourgeois society is doomed and that the bourgeoisie will be the cause of their own destruction. Why?
5. The authors dismiss the importance of ideas as a force in human affairs. On what grounds? Ultimately, what is the cause of historical change in their view?
6. What do you believe explains the popularity and influence of *The Communist Manifesto* among the working class and those who sympathized with their plight?
7. How does *The Communist Manifesto*'s vision of the past and future resemble that of Condorcet's *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind* (source 38)?
8. How would Marx and Engels have responded to the point of view represented by Samuel Smiles in *Self-Help* and *Thrift* (source 62)?

## I. THE BOURGEOISIE AND PROLETARIAT

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. . . .

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — bourgeoisie and proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, in which industrial production was monopolized by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed aside by the manufacturing middle class;

division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, modern industry, the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois. . . .

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange. . . .

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." . . . It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. . . .

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organization of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution



adapted to it, and by the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production.

And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand, by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians. . . .

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army

they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois state; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overseer, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is. . . .

The lower strata of the middle class — the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants — all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labor, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (trade unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.



Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battle lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. . . .

This organization of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. . . .

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

## II. PROLETARIANS AND COMMUNISTS

The distinguishing feature of communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing

and appropriating products that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property. . . .

You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of its population; its existence for the few is solely due to its nonexistence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the nonexistence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend. . . .

The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. . . .

National differences and antagonism between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.

The charges against communism made from a religious, a philosophical and, generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one

word, man's consciousness, change with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class. . . .

#### IV. POSITION OF THE COMMUNISTS IN RELATION TO THE VARIOUS EXISTING OPPOSITION PARTIES

The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilization and with a much more developed

proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution.

In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.

In all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time. . . .

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Working men of all countries, unite!

## Racism, Militarism, and the New Nationalism



### ▼ *Heinrich von Treitschke,* *Extracts from HISTORY OF GERMANY* *IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY and* *HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL WRITINGS*

As nationalism grew in nineteenth-century Europe, it also changed. In the first half of the century, when nationalists saw conservative monarchical governments as the main obstacle to national self-determination, nationalism was linked to republicanism and liberalism. During the middle of the century, especially in Germany and Italy, nationalism was championed by pragmatic and moderate leaders, who believed that hard-headed politics, not romantic gestures and lofty republican ideals, would bring about their people's unification or independence from foreign rule. By century's end nationalism was increasingly associated with racism and identified with conservative if not reactionary groups that used it to justify large military outlays, promote imperialism and aggressive foreign policies, and lure the masses away from socialism and democracy.

The German historian Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896) represents this later link between nationalism and militarism, racism, and authoritarianism. The son of a Prussian general, Treitschke taught history at several universities, including the prestigious University of Berlin, where he concluded his career. He also was a member of the German representative assembly, the Reichstag, from 1871 to 1884. His best-known work is his seven-volume *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*. In this and his numerous other writings, lectures, and speeches, Treitschke acclaimed militarism, authoritarianism, and war as the path to German greatness. His views struck a responsive chord among many Germans who feared socialism and democracy and yearned for the day when Germany would be recognized as the world's most powerful nation.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What, according to Treitschke, is the relationship between the state and the individual?
2. Why, according to Treitschke, is monarchy superior to democracy?
3. What qualities of Germans set them apart from other peoples, especially the English and the Jews, according to Treitschke?
4. Early nineteenth-century nationalists believed that all nations had a contribution to make to human progress. What is Treitschke's view?
5. What, according to Treitschke, is the value of war for a nation?



## ON THE GERMAN CHARACTER

Depth of thought, idealism, cosmopolitan views; a transcendent philosophy which boldly oversteps (or freely looks over) the separating barriers of finite existence, familiarity with every human thought and feeling, the desire to traverse the world-wide realm of ideas in common with the foremost intellects of all nations and all times. All that has at all times been held to be characteristic of the Germans and has always been praised as the essence of German character and breeding.

The simple loyalty of the Germans contrasts remarkably with the lack of chivalry in the English character. This seems to be due to the fact that in England physical culture is sought, not in the exercise of noble arms, but in sports like boxing, swimming, and rowing, sports which undoubtedly have their value, but which obviously tend to encourage a brutal and purely athletic point of view, and the single and superficial ambition of getting a first prize.<sup>1</sup>

## ON THE STATE

The state is a moral community, which is called upon to educate the human race by positive achievement. Its ultimate object is that a nation should develop in it, a nation distinguished by a real national character. To achieve this state is the highest moral duty for nation and individual alike. All private quarrels must be forgotten when the state is in danger.

At the moment when the state cries out that its very life is at stake, social selfishness must cease and party hatred be hushed. The individual must forget his egoism, and feel that he is a member of the whole body.

The most important possession of a state, its be-all and end-all, is power. He who is not man enough to look this truth in the face should not meddle in politics. The state is not physical power as an end in itself, it is power to protect and promote the higher interests. Power must justify itself by being applied for the greatest good of mankind. It is the highest moral duty of the state to increase its power.

The true greatness of the state is that it links the past with the present and future, consequently, the individual has no right to regard the state as a means for attaining his own ambitions in life. Every extension of the activities of the state is beneficial and wise if it arouses, promotes, and purifies the independence of free and reasoning men; it is evil when it kills and stunts the independence of free men. It is men who make history.

The state does not stand for the whole life of the nation. Its function is essentially protective and administrative. The state does not swallow up everything; it can only influence by external compulsion. It represents the nation from the point of view of power. For in the state it is not only the great primitive forces of human nature that come into play; the state is the basis of all national life. Briefly, it may be affirmed that a state which is not capable of forming and maintaining an external organization of its civilizing activities deserves to perish.

Only the truly great and powerful states ought to exist. Small states are unable to protect their subjects against external enemies; moreover, they are incapable of producing genuine patriotism or national pride and are sometimes incapable of *Kultur*<sup>2</sup> in great dimensions. Weimar produced a Goethe and a Schiller;<sup>3</sup> still these poets would have been greater had they been citizens of a German national state.

<sup>1</sup>Treitschke is correct in drawing a distinction between English and German sports. In the nineteenth century the English prized competitive athletic contests, while the Germans favored group calisthenics and exercises.

<sup>2</sup>German for *culture* or *civilization*.

<sup>3</sup>Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and Johann von Schiller (1759–1805) were German poets and dramatists who lived before Germany became a unified state. They both spent a good part of their adult lives in the city of Weimar, the capital of the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar.



## ON MONARCHY

The will of the state is, in a monarchy, the expression of the will of one man who wears the crown by virtue of the historic right of a certain family; with him the final authority rests. Nothing in a monarchy can be done contrary to the will of the monarch. In a democracy, plurality, the will of the people, expresses the will of the state. A monarchy excels any other form of government, including the democratic, in achieving unity and power in a nation. It is for this reason that monarchy seems so natural, and that it makes such an appeal to the popular understanding. We Germans had an experience of this in the first years of our new empire.<sup>4</sup> How wonderfully the idea of a united Fatherland was embodied for us in the person of the venerable Emperor! How much it meant to us that we could feel once more: "That man is Germany; there is no doubting it!"

## ON WAR

The idea of perpetual peace is an illusion supported only by those of weak character. It has always been the weary, spiritless, and exhausted ages which have played with the dream of perpetual peace. A thousand touching portraits testify to the sacred power of the love which a righteous war awakes in noble nations. It is altogether impossible that peace be maintained in a world bristling with arms, and even God will see to it that war always recurs as a drastic medicine for the human race. Among great states the greatest political sin and the most contemptible is feebleness. . . .

War is elevating because the individual disappears before the great conception of the state.

The devotion of the members of a community to each other is nowhere so splendidly conspicuous as in war.

Modern wars are not waged for the sake of goods and resources. What is at stake is the sublime moral good of national honor, which has something in the nature of unconditional sanctity, and compels the individual to sacrifice himself for it.

## ON THE ENGLISH

The hypocritical Englishman, with the Bible in one hand and a pipe of opium<sup>5</sup> in the other, possesses no redeeming qualities. The nation was an ancient robber-knight, in full armor, lance in hand, on every one of the world's trade routes.

The English possess a commercial spirit, a love of money which has killed every sentiment of honor and every distinction of right and wrong. English cowardice and sensuality are hidden behind unctuous, theological fine talk which is to us free-thinking German heretics among all the sins of English nature the most repugnant. In England all notions of honor and class prejudices vanish before the power of money, whereas the German nobility has remained poor but chivalrous. That last indispensable bulwark against the brutalization of society — the duel — has gone out of fashion in England and soon disappeared, to be supplanted by the riding whip.<sup>6</sup> This was a triumph of vulgarity. The newspapers, in their accounts of aristocratic weddings, record in exact detail how much each wedding guest has contributed in the form of presents or in cash; even the youth of the nation have turned their sports into a business, and contend for valuable prizes, whereas the German students wrought havoc on their countenances for the sake of a real or imaginary honor.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>When Germany became a unified state in 1871, the king of Prussia, William I, became emperor of Germany.

<sup>5</sup>Treitschke is making a point about what he considers the hypocrisy of the British, professed Christians who nonetheless sell opium to the Chinese. See Lin Zexu's Letter to Queen Victoria in Chapter 10 (source 80).

<sup>6</sup>Aristocratic males frequently settled disputes concerning their honor by dueling. To Treitschke, abandoning the duel

for less manly pursuits such as hunting and horseback riding was a sign of decadence.

<sup>7</sup>Treitschke is again using examples from sports to underscore the differences between the Germans and English. By the end of the nineteenth century English sports such as rugby and football (American soccer) were organized into professional leagues; the Germans were still willing to be scarred in duels to defend their honor.

## ON JEWS

The Jews at one time played a necessary role in German history, because of their ability in the management of money. But now that the Aryans<sup>8</sup> have become accustomed to the idiosyncrasies of finance, the Jews are no longer necessary.

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<sup>8</sup>Today, the term *Aryan*, or Indo-Iranian, refers to a branch of the Indo-European family of languages, which also includes Baltic, Slavic, Armenian, Greek, Celtic, Latin, and Germanic. Indo-Iranian includes Bengali, Persian, Punjabi, and Hindi. In Treitschke's day *Aryan* was used not only to refer to the prehistoric language from which all these lan-

The international Jew, hidden in the mask of different nationalities, is a disintegrating influence; he can be of no further use to the world. It is necessary to speak openly about the Jews, undisturbed by the fact that the Jewish press befouls what is purely historical truth.

guages derived but also to the racial group that spoke the language and migrated from its base in central Asia to Europe and India in the distant past. In the racial mythology that grew in connection with the term and later was embraced by Hitler and the Nazis, the Aryans provided Europe's original racial stock.



## The Fate of the Ndebele



### ▼ *Ndansi Kumalo, HIS STORY*

If one seeks proof of the remarkable changes in Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, consider the fate of the *Ndebele* (pronounced en-duh-bee'-lee) and the life of one of their sons, Ndansi Kumalo. In the early nineteenth century the Ndebele were pastoralists living in southeastern Africa, a region of political turmoil and economic hardship as a result of overpopulation and drought. In the 1820s they fled from the warriors of the Zulu chieftain Shaka, who in just a few years created a large and formidable Zulu state in southeastern Africa. The Ndebele moved to a region north of the Vaal River but ten years later were forced off their land by Boer *trekkers*, Dutch pioneers from the south who sought grazing land for their cattle. The Ndebele moved north of the Limpopo River to a region that is part of modern Zimbabwe. Despite their years of flight, they were able to subdue other groups in the region and establish a sizable kingdom with a population of one hundred thousand.

But the Ndebele could not escape danger. This time it came from the British, who, under the famous imperialist, Cecil Rhodes, were anxious to exploit the region's mineral wealth. In 1888 the Ndebele chieftain, Lobengula, signed an agreement with Rhodes that gave the South Africa Company mining rights in exchange for one thousand rifles and a monthly stipend of one hundred pounds. Friction grew when European settlers began establishing farmsteads around 1890, and war broke out in 1893. The Ndebele were defeated, and they were defeated again when they rose up against the British in 1897. The Ndebele then made one last journey to a vast but arid reservation their new masters provided.

One of the Ndebele who made this journey was Ndansi Kumalo. Born in the late 1870s, he was raised as a warrior to protect Ndebele land and raid neighbors for wives and cattle. He fought against the British in the 1890s and took up farming after the Ndebele's defeat. In 1932 he caught the attention of a British filmmaker who was in Southern Rhodesia to make *Rhodes of Africa*, on the life of Cecil Rhodes. He was recruited to play the part of Lobengula, the Ndebele chieftain. To complete the film he traveled to England, where he took in the sights of London and made his first plane flight. While there, he also related his life story to the English Africanist, Margery Perham, whose transcription of it serves as the basis for the following excerpt. *Rhodes of Africa* was a modest success, and after it opened, Ndansi Kumalo returned to Africa, where he rejoined his large family. In the following excerpt he describes events of the 1890s.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Who was to blame for the outbreak of hostilities between the Ndebele and the British in 1893?
2. How did conditions following the war lead to the 1897 rebellion?
3. The condition of the Ndebele rapidly deteriorated after the suppression of the rebellion. Why?



4. Aside from raising revenue, what might the British have hoped to achieve by imposing, then raising, taxes on the Ndebele?
5. What economic changes did the Ndebele experience as a result of their subjection to the Europeans?
6. Do you agree with Ndansi Kumalo that the arrival of Europeans was a mixed blessing? Why?

We were terribly upset and very angry at the coming of the white men, for Lobengula . . . was under her . . . [The Queen's] protection and it was quite unjustified that white men should come with force into our country.<sup>1</sup> . . . Lobengula had no war in his heart: he had always protected the white men and been good to them. If he had meant war, would he have sent our regiments far away to the north at this moment? As far as I know the trouble began in this way. Gandani, a chief who was sent out, reported that some of the Mashona<sup>2</sup> had taken the king's cattle; some regiments were detailed to follow and recover them. They followed the Mashona to Ziminto's people. Gandani had strict instructions not to molest the white people established in certain parts and to confine himself to the people who had taken the cattle. The commander was given a letter which he had to produce to the Europeans and tell them what the object of the party was. But the members of the party were restless and went without reporting to the white people and killed a lot of Mashonas. The pioneers were very angry and said, "You have trespassed into our part." They went with the letter, but only after they had killed some people, and the white men said, "You have done wrong, you should have brought the letter first and then we should have given you permission to follow the cattle." The commander received orders from the white people to get out, and up to a certain point which he could not possibly reach in the time allowed. A force followed them up and they defended

themselves. When the pioneers turned out there was a fight at Shangani and at Bembezi. . . .

The next news was that the white people had entered Bulawayo; the King's kraal<sup>3</sup> had been burnt down and the King had fled. Of the cattle very few were recovered; most fell into the hands of the white people. Only a very small portion were found and brought to Shangani where the King was, and we went there to give him any assistance we could. . . . Three of our leaders mounted their horses and followed up the King and he wanted to know where his cattle were; they said they had fallen into the hands of the whites, only a few were left. He said, "Go back and bring them along." But they did not go back again; the white forces had occupied Bulawayo and they went into the Matoppos. Then the white people came to where we were living and sent word round that all chiefs and warriors should go into Bulawayo and discuss peace, for the King had gone and they wanted to make peace. . . . The white people said, "Now that your King has deserted you, we occupy your country. Do you submit to us?" What could we do? "If you are sincere, come back and bring in all your arms, guns, and spears." We did so. . . .

So we surrendered to the white people and were told to go back to our homes and live our usual lives and attend to our crops. But the white men sent native police who did abominable things; they were cruel and assaulted a lot of our people and helped themselves to our cattle and goats. These policemen were not our own people; any-

<sup>1</sup>In the agreement Lobengula signed with Rhodes in 1888 the British government (Her Majesty's government) guaranteed there would be no English settlers on Ndebele land and no decrease of Lobengula's authority. Lobengula's con-

cessions angered many of his warriors, who began to press for war against the Europeans.

<sup>2</sup>Pastoralists subject to the Ndebele.

<sup>3</sup>The stockade where the king lived.

body was made a policeman. We were treated like slaves. They came and were overbearing and we were ordered to carry their clothes and bundles. They interfered with our wives and our daughters and molested them. In fact, the treatment we received was intolerable. We thought it best to fight and die rather than bear it. How the rebellion started I do not know; there was no organization, it was like a fire that suddenly flames up. We had been flogged by native police and then they rubbed salt water in the wounds. There was much bitterness because so many of our cattle were branded and taken away from us; we had no property, nothing we could call our own. We said, "It is no good living under such conditions; death would be better — let us fight." Our King gone, we had submitted to the white people and they ill-treated us until we became desperate and tried to make an end of it all. We knew that we had very little chance because their weapons were so much superior to ours. But we meant to fight to the last, feeling that even if we could not beat them we might at least kill a few of them and so have some sort of revenge.

I fought in the rebellion. We used to look out for valleys where the white men were likely to approach. We took cover behind rocks and trees and tried to ambush them. We were forced by the nature of our weapons not to expose ourselves. I had a gun, a breech-loader. They — the white men — fought us with big guns and Maxims<sup>4</sup> and rifles.

I remember a fight in the Matoppos when we charged the white men. There were some hundreds of us; the white men also were as many. We charged them at close quarters: we thought we had a good chance to kill them but the Maxims were too much for us. We drove them off at the first charge, but they returned and formed up again. We made a second charge, but they were too strong for us. I cannot say how many white people were killed, but we think it was

quite a lot. . . . Many of our people were killed in this fight: I saw four of my cousins shot. One was shot in the jaw and the whole of his face was blown away — like this — and he died. One was hit between the eyes; another here, in the shoulder; another had part of his ear shot off. We made many charges but each time we were beaten off, until at last the white men packed up and retreated. But for the Maxims, it would have been different. . . .

So peace was made. Many of our people had been killed, and now we began to die of starvation; and then came the rinderpest<sup>5</sup> and the cattle that were still left to us perished. We could not help thinking that all these dreadful things were brought by the white people. We struggled, and the Government helped us with grain; and by degrees we managed to get crops and pulled through. Our cattle were practically wiped out, but a few were left and from them we slowly bred up our herds again. We were offered work in the mines and farms to earn money and so were able to buy back some cattle. At first, of course, we were not used to going out to work, but advice was given that the chief should advise the young people to go out to work, and gradually they went. At first we received a good price for our cattle and sheep and goats. Then the tax came. It was 10s.<sup>6</sup> a year. Soon the Government said, "That is too little, you must contribute more; you must pay £1." We did so. Then those who took more than one wife were taxed; 10s. for each additional wife. The tax is heavy, but that is not all. We are also taxed for our dogs; 5s. for a dog. Then we were told we were living on private land; the owners wanted rent in addition to the Government tax; some 10s. some £1, some £2 a year. . . .

Would I like to have the old days back? Well, the white men have brought some good things. For a start, they brought us European implements — plows; we can buy European clothes, which are an advance. The Government has arranged

<sup>4</sup>Invented by the American-born engineer Hiram S. Maxim, the Maxim gun was an early machine gun.

<sup>5</sup>An acute infectious disease of cattle.

<sup>6</sup>s. = shilling, one-twentieth of a pound.

for education and through that, when our children grow up, they may rise in status. We want them to be educated and civilized and make better citizens. Even in our own time there were troubles, there was much fighting and many innocent people were killed. It is infinitely better to have peace instead of war, and our treatment generally by the officials is better than it was at first. But, under the white people, we still have our troubles. Economic conditions are telling on us very severely. We are on land where the rainfall is scanty, and things will not grow well. In our own time we could pick our own country, but now all the best land has been taken by the white people. We get hardly any price for our cattle; we find it hard to meet our money obligations. If we have crops to spare we get very little for them; we find it difficult to make ends meet and wages are very low. When I view the position, I see that our rainfall has diminished, we have suffered drought and have poor crops and we do not see any hope of improvement, but all the same our taxes do not diminish. We see no prosperous days ahead of us. There is one thing we think an injustice. When we have plenty of grain the prices are very low, but the moment we are short of grain and we have to buy from Europeans at once the price is high. If when we have hard times and find it difficult to meet our obligations some of these burdens were taken off us it would gladden our hearts. As it is, if we do

raise anything, it is never our own: all, or most of it, goes back in taxation. We can never save any money. If we could, we could help ourselves: we could build ourselves better houses; we could buy modern means of traveling about, a cart, or donkeys or mules.

As to my own life, I have had twelve wives altogether, five died and seven are alive. I have twenty-six children alive, five have died. Of my sons five are married and are all at work farming; three young children go to school. I hope the younger children will all go to school. I think it is a good thing to go to school.

There are five schools in our district. Quite a number of people are Christians, but I am too old to change my ways. In our religion we believe that when anybody dies the spirit remains and we often make offerings to the spirits to keep them good-tempered. But now the making of offerings is dying out rapidly, for every member of the family should be present, but the children are Christians and refuse to come, so the spirit-worship is dying out. A good many of our children go to the mines in the Union, for the wages are better there. Unfortunately a large number do not come back at all. And some send money to their people — others do not. Some men have even deserted their families, their wives, and children. If they cannot go by train they walk long distances.





## The Fall of Vietnam



▼ *Phan Thanh Gian,*  
*LETTER TO EMPEROR TU DUC and*  
*LAST MESSAGE TO HIS ADMINISTRATORS*

Phan Thanh Gian (1796–1867) poignantly represents the submission of traditional Confucian Vietnam to French imperialism. The Nguyen (nuh-win') Dynasty, having unified the country and moved its capital from Hanoi to Hué in 1802, attempted to govern strictly on the principles of Confucianism, which, in contrast to the Hindu-Buddhist or Muslim influence throughout the rest of the region, had largely shaped Vietnam's scholarship, politics, and values. The Nguyen emperors' efforts to turn Vietnam into a model Confucian society led directly to the persecution of Vietnamese Christians, who, as a result of efforts by French, Spanish, and Portuguese missionaries, numbered three hundred thousand by the nineteenth century. When Vietnamese Catholics were implicated in a rebellion in 1833, the emperor ordered the imprisonment and execution of converts and European missionaries. This step caused the French, who sixty years earlier had helped the Nguyen Dynasty gain power, to send troops to Vietnam in 1858, ostensibly to protect Christianity but also to advance French imperialism. Although the Vietnamese staunchly resisted, Emperor Tu Duc accepted a settlement in 1862 by which he ceded to the French three southern provinces around Saigon.

Four years later, an anti-French rebellion broke out in three provinces west of Saigon, then under the governorship of Phan Thanh Gian, one of Vietnam's leading statesmen and the head of a delegation sent to Paris in 1863 to negotiate with the French government. When he failed to suppress the revolts, the French sent in troops and demanded control of the provinces. Phan Thanh Gian acquiesced and then committed suicide, but not before he wrote the following two letters, one to Emperor Tu Duc and the other to administrators in his district.

### *QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS*

1. What is the basis of Phan Thanh Gian's hope that the emperor can save Vietnam from further humiliation at the hands of the French?
2. What is Phan Thanh Gian's view of the French?
3. What evidence of Phan Thanh Gian's Confucian training do you see in the letter?
4. Why did Phan Thanh Gian decide to acquiesce to the French?

## LETTER TO EMPEROR TU DUC

8, July 1867

I, Phan Thanh Gian, make the following report, in expressing frankly, with my head bowed, my humble sentiments, and in soliciting, with my head raised, your discerning scrutiny.

During the period of difficulties and misfortunes that we are presently undergoing, rebellion is rising around the capital, the pernicious influence<sup>1</sup> is expanding on our frontiers. The territorial question is rapidly leading to a situation that it is impossible to end.

My duty compels me to die. I would not dare to live thoughtlessly, leaving a heritage of shame to my Sovereign and my Father. Happily, I have confidence in my Emperor, who has extensive knowledge of ancient times and the present and who has studied profoundly the causes of peace and of dissension: . . . In respectfully observing the warnings of Heaven and in having pity on the misery of man . . . in changing the string of the guitar, in modifying the track of the governmental chariot, it is still possible for you to act in accordance with your authority and means.

At the last moment of life, the throat constricted, I do not know what to say, but, in wiping my tears and in raising my eyes toward you affectionately, I can only ardently hope that this wish will be realized. With respect, I make this report, Tu Duc, twentieth year, sixth moon, seventh day, Phan Thanh Gian.

LAST MESSAGE  
TO HIS ADMINISTRATORS

Mandarins and people,

It is written: He who lives in accordance with the will of Heaven lives in virtue; he who does

not live according to the will of Heaven lives in evil. To work according to the will of Heaven is to listen to natural reason. . . . Man is an intelligent animal created by Heaven. Every animal lives according to his nature, as water flows to low ground, as fire goes out on dry ground. . . . Men, to whom Heaven has given reason, must apply themselves to live in obedience to this reason which Heaven has given them.

The empire of our king is ancient. Our gratitude toward our kings is complete and always ardent; we cannot forget them. Now, the French are come, with their powerful weapons of war to cause dissension among us. We are weak against them; our commanders and our soldiers have been vanquished. Each battle adds to our misery. . . . The French have immense warships, filled with soldiers and armed with huge cannons. No one can resist them. They go where they want, the strongest ramparts fall before them.

I have raised my spirit toward Heaven and I have listened to the voice of reason. And I have said: "It would be as senseless for you to wish to defeat your enemies by force of arms as for a young fawn to attack a tiger. You attract uselessly great misfortunes upon the people whom Heaven has confided to you. I have thus written to all the mandarins and to all the war commanders to break their lances and surrender the forts without fighting.

But, if I have followed the Will of Heaven by averting great evils from the head of the people, I am a traitor to our king in delivering without resistance the provinces which belong to him. . . . I deserve death. Mandarins and people, you can live under the command of the French, who are only terrible during the battle, but their flag must never fly above a fortress where Phan Thanh Gian still lives."

<sup>1</sup>The French.



## The Romance of War



### ▼ *POPULAR ART AND POSTER ART FROM GERMANY, ENGLAND, AUSTRALIA, AND FRANCE*

When the soldiers marched off to war in the summer of 1914, crowds cheered, young men rushed to enlist, and politicians promised that “the boys would be home by Christmas.” Without having experienced a general war since the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and with little thought to the millions of casualties in the American Civil War, Europeans saw the war as a glorious adventure — an opportunity to fight for the flag or kaiser or queen, to wear splendid uniforms, and to win glory in battles that would be decided by élan, spirit, and bravery. The war they fought was nothing like the war they imagined, and the disparity between expectations and reality was one of the many reasons why the four-year struggle was fraught with such disillusionment and bitterness.



The four illustrations shown here portray the positive attitudes toward the war that all belligerents shared at the outset and that governments sought to perpetuate as the war dragged on. The first (page 383, left), entitled *The Departure*, shows a German troop train departing for the battlefield in late summer 1914. It originally appeared in the German periodical *Simplicissimus* in August 1914 and was the work of B. Hennerberg, an artist originally from Sweden and a regular contributor to the magazine. That *Simplicissimus* would publish such an illustration is a monument to the nationalist emotions the war generated. Noted before the war for its irreverent satire and criticism of German militarism, *Simplicissimus*, as a result of a decision by its editors, abandoned its antiestablishment stance and lent its full support to the war effort.

The second illustration (page 383, right) is one of a series of cards that the Mitchell Tobacco Company included in its packs of Golden Dawn Cigarettes in the early stages of the war. It shows a sergeant offering smokes to the soldiers under his command before battle. Tobacco advertising with military themes reached a saturation point in England during the war years.

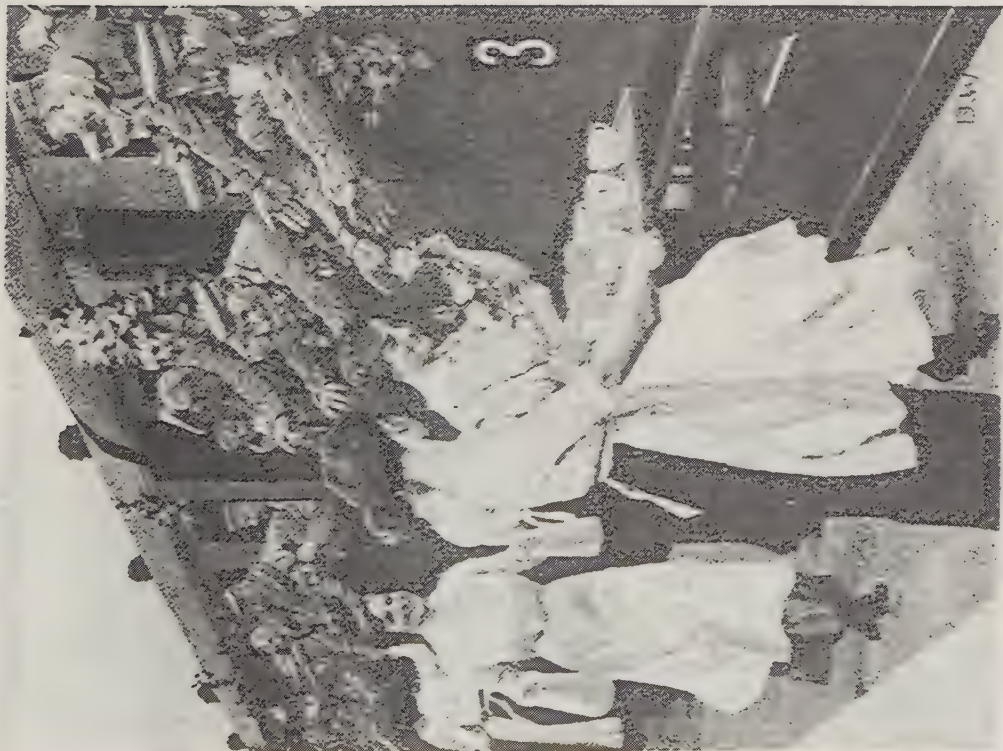
An Australian recruitment poster issued in 1915 serves as the third illustration (page 384, left). Although Australia, like Canada, had assumed authority over its own internal affairs by the time the war started, its foreign policy was still controlled by Great Britain. Hence when Great Britain went to war, so did Australia. The Australian parliament refused to approve conscription, however, so the government had to work hard to encourage volunteers. This particular poster appeared in 1915, at a time when Australian troops were heavily involved in the Gallipoli campaign, the allied effort to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war. Directing its message to the many young men who were members of sports clubs, it promised them the opportunity to enlist in a battalion made up entirely of fellow sportsmen. Such battalions had already been formed in England.

The fourth illustration (page 384, right), a poster from France, was designed to encourage the purchase of war bonds, which were sold by all major belligerents to finance the war. It appeared in 1916 in the midst of the Battle of Verdun, which lasted from February to November and resulted in more than five hundred thousand French casualties but hardly any change in the battle lines. The French soldier shouts, "On les aura!" ("We'll get them!"), words ascribed to General Henri Philippe Pétain, who was in charge of the Verdun defense until he was promoted and given command of all French armies in the field in the summer of 1916.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What message about the war does each of the four illustrations seek to communicate?
2. In what specific ways does each example romanticize war and the life of a soldier?
3. What impression of combat do the English tobacco card and the French war bond poster communicate?
4. What does Hennerberg's painting suggest about women's anticipated role in the war?



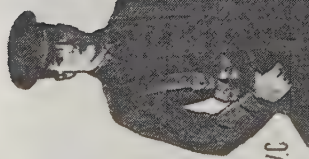
B. Hennerberg, *The Departure*



Advertisement card from *Golden Dawn Cigarettes*



JOIN TOGETHER  
 TRAIN TOGETHER  
 EMBARK TOGETHER  
 FIGHT TOGETHER



LIEUT. JACKA V.C.



Enlist in the  
**Sportsmen's  
 Thousand**

SHOW THE ENEMY WHAT  
 AUSTRALIAN SPORTING MEN CAN DO.

REV. 31, 1918. POSTER 101

Australian recruitment poster

*On les aura !*



2<sup>E</sup> EMPRUNT  
 DE  
 LA DÉFENSE NATIONALE

*Souscrivez*

French poster encouraging purchase of war bonds

## The Reality of War in Verse



▼ *Wilfred Owen,*  
*"DULCE ET DECORUM EST"*  
*and "DISABLED"*

So great was the carnage of World War I that no historian has captured its horror as vividly as poets and writers of fiction. Every major belligerent had writers who evoked the desolation and inhumanity of trench warfare. Among the most powerful was the British poet Wilfred Owen (1893–1918), who enlisted in the British army in 1915 at the age of twenty-two, was wounded in 1917, hospitalized, released, sent back to the trenches, and killed on November 4, 1918, one week before the armistice.

Owen's poem "Dulce et Decorum Est," written in 1915, takes its title from a line by the ancient Roman poet Horace, "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country." The subject of the poem is a poison gas attack. The Germans launched the first large-scale gas attack in April 1915 when they released chloride gas from cylinders so that it was carried by the wind toward French and Canadian troops in the vicinity of Ypres. Subsequently both sides used poison gas, with phosgene and mustard gas being delivered by artillery shells by 1918. "Disabled," also written in 1915, describes the situation of a badly mutilated Scottish soldier who enlisted before he was eighteen years old and now sits in a wheelchair in an institution where he survives but barely.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How in "Dulce et Decorum Est" does Owen describe the mental and physical conditions of the foot soldiers?
2. What imagery does he apply to the body of the gas victim?
3. Why does Owen find the plight of the young Scottish soldier so compelling?
4. In what specific ways do Owen's poems attempt to dispel the illusions about war represented in the art in source 88?

### DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed  
 through sludge,  
 Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
 And towards our distant rest began the trudge.  
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots

But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all  
 blind;  
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoors  
 Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines<sup>1</sup> that dropped  
 behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of  
 fumbling,

<sup>1</sup>Slang for artillery shells used by the Germans.



Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
 But someone still was yelling out and stum-  
 bling,  
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .  
 Dim, through the misty panes and thick green  
 light,  
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.  
 In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking,  
 drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could  
 pace  
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,  
 My friend, you would not tell with such high  
 zest,  
 To children ardent for some desperate glory.  
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
 Pro patria mori.

## DISABLED

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,  
 And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,  
 Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park  
 Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,  
 Voices of play and pleasure after day,  
 Till gathering sleep had mothered them from  
 him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay  
 When glow-lamps budded in the light blue  
 trees,  
 And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew  
 dim, —  
 In the old times, before he threw away his  
 knees.  
 Now he will never feel again how slim  
 Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle  
 hands.

All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,  
 For it was younger than his youth, last year.  
 Now, he is old; his back will never brace;  
 He's lost his colour very far from here,  
 Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran  
 dry,  
 And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race  
 And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.

One time he liked a bloodsmear down his leg,  
 After the matches, carried shoulder-high.  
 It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,  
 He thought he'd better join. — He wonders  
 why.  
 Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts.  
 That's why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg,  
 Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts<sup>2</sup>  
 He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;  
 Smiling they wrote his lie; aged nineteen  
 years.

Germans he scarcely thought of; all their guilt  
 And Austria's, did not move him. And no fears  
 Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts  
 For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;  
 And care of arms; and leave, and pay arrears;  
*Esprit de corps*; and hints for young recruits.  
 And soon, he was drafted out with drums and  
 cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds  
 cheer Goal.

Only a solemn man who brought him fruits  
*Thanked* him; and then inquired about his  
 soul.

Now, he will spend a few sick years in Insti-  
 tutes,  
 And do what things the rules consider wise,  
 And take whatever pity they may dole.  
 Tonight he noticed how the women's eyes  
 Passed from him to the strong men that were  
 whole.

How cold and late it is! Why don't they come  
 And put him to bed? Why don't they come?

<sup>2</sup>Scottish slang for young girls.

## "Führer, You Order. We Obey"



### ▼ *Rudolf Höss, MEMOIRS*

On gaining power, the Nazis began to implement the anti-Jewish policies Hitler had promised in *Mein Kampf* and thousands of Nazi books, pamphlets, and speeches. Jewish shops were plundered while police looked the other way, Jewish physicians were excluded from hospitals, Jewish judges lost their posts, Jewish students were denied admission to universities, and Jewish veterans were stripped of their benefits. In 1935 the Nazis promulgated the Nuremberg Laws, which deprived Jews of citizenship and outlawed marriage between Jews and non-Jews. In November 1938 the regime organized nationwide violence against Jewish synagogues and shops in what came to be known as *Kristallnacht*, or "night of the broken glass."

After the war began, conquests in Eastern Europe gave the Nazis new opportunities to deal with the "Jewish problem." In early 1941 they began to deport Jews from Germany and conquered territories to Poland and Czechoslovakia, where Jews were employed as slave laborers or placed in concentration camps. In June 1941 special units known as *Einsatzgruppe* ("special action forces") were organized to exterminate Jews in territories conquered by German armies on the eastern front. In eighteen months, they gunned down over one million Jews and threw them into open pits. Then in January 1942 at the Wannsee Conference outside Berlin, the Nazis approved the Final Solution to the so-called Jewish problem. Their goal became the extermination of European Jewry, and to reach it they constructed special camps where their murderous work could be done efficiently and quickly.

When World War II ended, the Nazis had not achieved their goal of annihilating Europe's eleven million Jews. They did, however, slaughter close to six million, thus earning themselves a permanent place in the long history of man's inhumanity to man.

The following excerpt comes from the memoirs of Rudolf Höss, the commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland between 1940 and 1943. Born in 1900, Höss abandoned plans to become a priest after serving in World War I and became involved in a number of right-wing political movements, including the Nazi Party, which he joined in the early 1920s. After serving a jail sentence for participating in the murder of a teacher suspected of "treason," Höss became a farmer and then in 1934, on the urging of Heinrich Himmler, a member of the Nazi SS, or *Schutzstaffel* (Guard Detachment). The SS under Himmler grew from a small security force to guard Hitler and other high-ranking Nazis into a powerful Nazi organization involved in police work, state security, intelligence gathering, administration of conquered territories, and management of the concentration camps. After postings at the Dachau and Sachsenhausen camps,

Höss was appointed commandant of Auschwitz, which began as a camp for Polish political prisoners but became a huge, sprawling complex where over a million Jews were gassed or shot and tens of thousands of prisoners served as slave laborers in nearby factories. In 1943 Höss became overseer of all the Third Reich's concentration camps, but he returned to Auschwitz in 1944 to oversee the murder of four hundred thousand Hungarian Jews. After his capture in 1946, he was tried and convicted for crimes against humanity. He was hanged on April 16, 1947, within sight of the villa where he and his family had lived while he served as commandant at Auschwitz.

While awaiting trial, Höss was encouraged to compose his memoirs to sharpen his recollection of the events he experienced. In the following passage he discusses his views of the Jews and his reaction to the mass killings he planned and witnessed.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Höss claim to have been his attitude toward the Jews?
2. How do his statements about the Jews accord with his assertion that he was a fanatic National Socialist?
3. Does Höss make any distinction between the Russians and Jews that he had exterminated?
4. What was Höss's attitude toward the Final Solution? How does Höss characterize his role in the mass extermination of the Jews?
5. How did his involvement in the Holocaust affect him personally? How, according to Höss, did it affect other German participants?
6. What would you describe as the key components of Höss's personality? To what extent was his personality shaped by the Nazi philosophy to which he was dedicated?
7. What insight does this excerpt provide about the issue of how much the German people knew of and participated in the Holocaust?

Since I was a fanatic National Socialist, I was firmly convinced that our idea would take hold in all countries, modified by the various local customs, and would gradually become dominant. This would then break the dominance of international Jewry. Anti-Semitism was nothing new throughout the whole world. It always made its strongest appearance when the Jews had pushed themselves into positions of power and when their evil actions became known to the general public. . . . I believed that because our ideas were better and stronger, we would prevail in the long run. . . .

I want to emphasize here that I personally never hated the Jews. I considered them to be the enemy of our nation. However, that was precisely the reason to treat them the same way as the other prisoners. I never made a distinction concerning this. Besides, the feeling of hatred is not in me, but I know what hate is, and how it manifests itself. I have seen it and I have felt it.

The original order of 1941 to annihilate all the Jews stated, "All Jews without exception are to be destroyed." It was later changed by Himmler so that those able to work were to be used in the arms factories. This made Auschwitz



the assembly point for the Jews to a degree never before known. . . .

When he gave me the order personally in the summer of 1941 to prepare a place for mass killings and then carry it out, I could never have imagined the scale, or what the consequences would be. Of course, this order was something extraordinary, something monstrous. However, the reasoning<sup>1</sup> behind the order of this mass annihilation seemed correct to me. At the time I wasted no thoughts about it. I had received an order; I had to carry it out. I could not allow myself to form an opinion as to whether this mass extermination of the Jews was necessary or not. At the time it was beyond my frame of mind. Since the Führer himself had ordered "The Final Solution of the Jewish Question," there was no second guessing for an old National Socialist, much less an SS officer. "Führer, you order. We obey" was not just a phrase or a slogan. It was meant to be taken seriously.<sup>1</sup>

Since my arrest I have been told repeatedly that I could have refused to obey this order, and even that I could have shot Himmler dead. I do not believe that among the thousands of SS officers there was even one who would have had even a glimmer of such a thought. . . . Of course, many SS officers moaned and groaned about the many harsh orders. Even then, they carried out every order. . . . As leader of the SS, Himmler's person was sacred. His fundamental orders in the name of the Führer were holy. There was no reflection, no interpretation, no explanation about these orders. They were carried out ruthlessly, regardless of the final consequences, even if it meant giving your life for them. Quite a few did that during the war.

It was not in vain that the leadership training of the SS officers held up the Japanese as shining examples of those willing to sacrifice their lives for the state and for the emperor, who was also

their god. SS education was not just a series of useless high school lectures. It went far deeper, and Himmler knew very well what he could demand of his SS.

Outsiders cannot possibly understand that there was not a single SS officer who would refuse to obey orders from Himmler, or perhaps even try to kill him because of a severely harsh order. Whatever the Führer or Himmler ordered was always right. Even democratic England has its saying, "My country, right or wrong," and every patriotic Englishman follows it.

▼ ▼ ▼

Before the mass destruction of the Jews began, all the Russian politruks<sup>2</sup> and political commissars were killed in almost every camp during 1941 and 1942. According to the secret order given by Hitler, the Einsatzgruppe searched for and picked up the Russian politruks and commissars from all the POW camps. They transferred all they found to the nearest concentration camp for liquidation. . . . The first small transports were shot by firing squads of SS soldiers.

While I was on an official trip, my second in command, Camp Commander Fritzsche, experimented with gas for killings. He used a gas called Cyclon B, prussic acid,<sup>3</sup> which was often used as an insecticide in the camp to exterminate lice and vermin. There was always a supply on hand. When I returned Fritzsche reported to me about how he had used the gas. We used it again to kill the next transport.

The gassing was carried out in the basement of Block 11. I viewed the killings wearing a gas mask for protection. Death occurred in the crammed-full cells immediately after the gas was thrown in. Only a brief choking outcry and it was all over. . . .

At the time I really didn't waste any thoughts about the killing of the Russian POWs. It was ordered; I had to carry it out. But I must admit

<sup>1</sup>All SS members swore the following oath: "I swear to you Adolf Hitler, as Führer and Chancellor of the Reich, loyalty and bravery. I vow to you and to the authorities appointed by you obedience unto death, so help me God."

<sup>2</sup>Communist Party members.

<sup>3</sup>Cyclon (or Zyclon) B is a blue crystalline substance, whose active ingredient, hydrocyanic acid, sublimates into a gas when it contacts the air. It causes death by combining with the red blood cells and preventing them from carrying oxygen to the body.



openly that the gassings had a calming effect on me, since in the near future the mass annihilation of the Jews was to begin. Up to this point it was not clear to me . . . how the killing of the expected masses was to be done. Perhaps by gas? But how, and what kind of gas? Now we had discovered the gas and the procedure. I was always horrified of death by firing squads, especially when I thought of the huge numbers of women and children who would have to be killed. I had had enough of hostage executions, and the mass killings by firing squad order by Himmler and Heydrich.<sup>4</sup>

Now I was at ease. We were all saved from these bloodbaths, and the victims would be spared until the last moment. That is what I worried about the most when I thought of Eichmann's<sup>5</sup> accounts of the mowing down of the Jews with machine guns and pistols by the Einsatzgruppe. Horrible scenes were supposed to have occurred: people running away even after being shot, the killing of those who were only wounded, especially the women and children. Another thing on my mind was the many suicides among the ranks of the SS Special Action Squads who could no longer mentally endure wading in the bloodbath. Some of them went mad. Most of the members of the Special Action Squads drank a great deal to help get through this horrible work. According to [Captain] Höfle's accounts, the men of Globocnik's<sup>6</sup> extermination section drank tremendous quantities of alcohol.

In the spring of 1942 [January] the first transports of Jews arrived from Upper Silesia. All of them were to be exterminated. They were led from the ramp across the meadow, later named section B-II of Birkenau,<sup>7</sup> to the farmhouse called Bunker I. Aumeier, Palitzsch, and a few other

block leaders led them and spoke to them as one would in casual conversation, asking them about their occupations and their schooling in order to fool them. After arriving at the farmhouse they were told to undress. At first they went very quietly into the rooms where they were supposed to be disinfected. At that point some of them became suspicious and started talking about suffocation and extermination. Immediately a panic started. Those still standing outside were quickly driven into the chambers, and the doors were bolted shut. In the next transport those who were nervous or upset were identified and watched closely at all times. As soon as unrest was noticed these troublemakers were inconspicuously led behind the farmhouse and killed with a small-caliber pistol, which could not be heard by the others. . . .

I also watched how some women who suspected or knew what was happening, even with the fear of death all over their faces, still managed enough strength to play with their children and to talk to them lovingly. Once a woman with four children, all holding each other by the hand to help the smallest ones over the rough ground, passed by me very slowly. She stepped very close to me and whispered, pointing to her four children, "How can you murder these beautiful, darling children? Don't you have any heart?"

Another time an old man hissed while passing me, "Germany will pay a bitter penance for the mass murder of the Jews." His eyes glowed with hatred as he spoke. In spite of this he went bravely into the gas chamber without worrying about the others. . . .

Occasionally some women would suddenly start screaming in a terrible way while undressing. They pulled out their hair and acted as if

<sup>4</sup>Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942) was Himmler's chief lieutenant in the SS. He organized the mass execution of Jews in Eastern Europe in 1941.

<sup>5</sup>Adolf Eichmann (1906–1962) was a Nazi bureaucrat originally involved with Jewish emigration. After the Wannsee Conference he was given responsibility for organizing the deportation of approximately three million Jews to the death camps. He fled to Argentina in 1946, but was captured by

Israeli agents who took him to Israel, where he was tried and executed in 1962.

<sup>6</sup>Odilio Globocnik was the officer responsible for organizing and training SS units in Eastern Europe.

<sup>7</sup>Birkenau was the German name for the town where a large addition to the Auschwitz complex was built in late 1941 and early 1942.

they had gone crazy. Quickly they were led behind the farmhouse and killed by a bullet in the back of the neck from a small-caliber pistol. . . . As the doors were being shut, I saw a woman trying to shove her children out the chamber, crying out, "Why don't you at least let my precious children live?" There were many heart-breaking scenes like this which affected all who were present.

In the spring of 1942 hundreds of people in the full bloom of life walked beneath the budding fruit trees of the farm into the gas chamber to their death, most of them without a hint of what was going to happen to them. To this day I can still see these pictures of the arrivals, the selections, and the procession to their death. . . .

The mass annihilation with all the accompanying circumstances did not fail to affect those who had to carry it out. They just did not watch what was happening. With very few exceptions all who performed this monstrous "work" had been ordered to this detail. All of us, including myself, were given enough to think about which left a deep impression. Many of the men often approached me during my inspection trips through the killing areas and poured out their depression and anxieties to me, hoping that I could give them some reassurance. During these conversations the question arose again and again, "Is what we have to do here necessary? Is it necessary that hundreds of thousands of women and children have to be annihilated?" And I, who countless times deep inside myself had asked the same question, had to put them off by reminding them that it was Hitler's order. I had to tell them that it was necessary to destroy all the Jews in order to forever free Germany and the future generations from our toughest enemy.

It goes without saying that the Hitler order was a firm fact for all of us, and also that it was the duty of the SS to carry it out. However, secret doubts tormented all of us. Under no circumstances could I reveal my secret doubts to

anyone. I had to convince myself to be like a rock when faced with the necessity of carrying out this horribly severe order, and I had to show this in every way, in order to force all those under me to hang on mentally and emotionally. . . .

Hour upon hour I had to witness all that happened. I had to watch day and night, whether it was the dragging and burning of the bodies, the teeth being ripped out, the cutting of the hair,<sup>8</sup> I had to watch all this horror. For hours I had to stand in the horrible, haunting stench while the mass graves were dug open, and the bodies were dragged out and burned. I also had to watch the procession of death itself through the peephole of the gas chamber because the doctors called my attention to it. I had to do all of this because I was the one to whom everyone looked, and because I had to show everybody that I was not only the one who gave the orders and issued the directives, but that I was also willing to be present at whatever task I ordered my men to perform. . . .

And yet, everyone in Auschwitz believed the Kommandant really had a good life. Yes, my family had it good in Auschwitz, every wish that my wife or my children had was fulfilled. The children could live free and easy. My wife had her flower paradise. The prisoners tried to give my wife every consideration and tried to do something nice for the children. By the same token no former prisoner can say that he was treated poorly in any way in our house. My wife would have loved to give a present to every prisoner who performed a service for us. The children constantly begged me for cigarettes for the prisoners. The children especially loved the gardeners. In our entire family there was a deep love for farming and especially for animals. Every Sunday I had to drive with them across all the fields, walk them through the stables, and we could never skip visiting the dog kennels. Their greatest love was for our two horses and our colt. The prisoners who worked in the household were al-

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<sup>8</sup>Teeth extracted from the corpses were soaked in muriatic acid to remove muscle and bone before the gold fillings were extracted. Some of the gold was distributed to den-

tists who used it in fillings for SS men and their families; the rest was deposited in the Reichsbank. Hair was used to make felt and thread.

ways dragging in some animal the children kept in the garden. Turtles, martens, cats, or lizards; there was always something new and interesting in the garden. The children splashed around in the summertime in the small pool in the garden or the Sola River. Their greatest pleasure was when daddy went into the water with them. But he had only a little time to share all the joys of childhood.

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<sup>9</sup>In an interview with a court-appointed psychiatrist during the Nuremberg trials in 1946, Höss stated that his wife actually did learn of his participation in the mass ex-

Today I deeply regret that I didn't spend more time with my family. I always believed that I had to be constantly on duty. Through this exaggerated sense of duty I always had made my life more difficult than it actually was. My wife often urged me, "Don't always think of your duty, think of your family too." But what did my wife know about the things that depressed me? She never found out.<sup>9</sup>

ecutions at the camp, and that afterward, they became estranged and ceased having sexual relations.

## "The Face of War Is the Face of Death"



### ▼ *Henry L. Stimson, "THE DECISION TO USE THE ATOMIC BOMB"*

President Truman, who as a senator from Missouri and as vice president under Roosevelt did not even know about the Manhattan Project, learned of the atomic bomb in a meeting with Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson on April 25, 1945, two weeks after President Roosevelt's death. His first response was to appoint a small committee, known as the Interim Committee, to advise him on the use of atomic weapons in the war and the immediate postwar era. Its members included Stimson and seven others: George Harrison, an insurance executive who was a special assistant to Stimson; James Byrnes, a presidential advisor and soon secretary of state; Ralph Bard, undersecretary of the navy; William Clayton, assistant secretary of state; Vannevar Bush, president of the Carnegie Institution in Washington; Karl Compton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and James Conant, president of Harvard University. They were advised by a Scientific Panel, made up of four persons who had played leading roles in the Manhattan Project: Enrico Fermi of Columbia University; Arthur H. Compton of the University of Chicago; Ernest Lawrence of the University of California at Berkeley; and Robert Oppenheimer, director of the atomic energy research project at Los Alamos, New Mexico.

The chair of the Interim Committee and the author of the excerpt that follows was Stimson. Born in 1867 in New York City and a graduate of Harvard College



and Yale Law School, Stimson had a distinguished career as a lawyer and public servant. Having served as secretary of war under President Taft and secretary of state under President Hoover, he was named secretary of war by Roosevelt in 1940, despite being a Republican. In 1947, after his retirement from public service and less than three years before his death in 1950, he published the article "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb" in *Harper's Magazine*. It focused on the work of the Interim Committee and the reasons why Stimson advised President Truman to drop the bombs on Japan without warning. Excerpts from the article follow.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How did the background and specific purposes of the Manhattan Project affect decision making in 1945?
2. For those who supported the immediate use of the bombs, what specific goals did they hope to achieve?
3. How was the choice of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as targets related to these goals?
4. How seriously does it appear that the views expressed in the Franck Report were considered by the Interim Committee and Stimson? Why did they ultimately reject the report's proposals?
5. What were Stimson's views of the nature of war? How did his views affect his decision to support the immediate use of the atomic bombs?

### [GOALS OF THE MANHATTAN PROJECT]

The policy adopted and steadily pursued by President Roosevelt and his advisers was a simple one. It was to spare no effort in securing the earliest possible successful development of an atomic weapon. The reasons for this policy were equally simple. The original experimental achievement of atomic fission had occurred in Germany in 1938, and it was known that the Germans had continued their experiments. In 1941 and 1942 they were believed to be ahead of us, and it was vital that they should not be the first to bring atomic weapons into the field of battle. Furthermore, if we should be the first to develop the weapon, we should have a great new instrument for shortening the war and minimizing destruction. At no time, from 1941 to 1945, did I ever hear it suggested by the President, or by any

other responsible member of government, that atomic energy should not be used in the war. All of us of course understood the terrible responsibility involved in our attempt to unlock the doors to such a devastating weapon; President Roosevelt particularly spoke to me many times of his own awareness of the catastrophic potentialities of our work. But we were at war, and the work must be done. . . .

### [RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE AND THE SECRETARY OF WAR]

The discussions of the committee ranged over the whole field of atomic energy, in its political, military, and scientific aspects. . . . The committee's work included the drafting of the statements which were published immediately

after the first bombs were dropped, the drafting of a bill for the domestic control of atomic energy, and recommendations looking toward the international control of atomic energy. . . . At a meeting with the Interim Committee and the Scientific Panel on May 31, 1945 I urged all those present to feel free to express themselves on any phase of the subject, scientific or political. Both General Marshall<sup>1</sup> and I at this meeting expressed the view that atomic energy could not be considered simply in terms of military weapons but must also be considered in terms of a new relationship of man to the universe.

On June 1, after its discussions with the Scientific Panel, the Interim Committee unanimously adopted the following recommendations:

- (1) The bomb should be used against Japan as soon as possible.
- (2) It should be used on a dual target — that is, a military installation or war plant surrounded by or adjacent to houses and other buildings most susceptible to damage, and
- (3) It should be used without prior warning [of the nature of the weapon]. One member of the committee, Mr. Bard,<sup>2</sup> later changed his view and dissented from recommendation.

In reaching these conclusions the Interim Committee carefully considered such alternatives as a detailed advance warning or a demonstration in some uninhabited area. Both of these suggestions were discarded as impractical. They were not regarded as likely to be effective in compelling a surrender of Japan, and both of them involved serious risks. Even the New Mexico test would not give final proof that any given bomb was certain to explode when dropped from an airplane. Quite apart from the generally unfamiliar nature of atomic explosives, there was the

whole problem of exploding a bomb at a predetermined height in the air by a complicated mechanism which could not be tested in the static test of New Mexico. Nothing would have been more damaging to our effort to obtain surrender than a warning or a demonstration followed by a dud — and this was a real possibility. Furthermore, we had no bombs to waste. It was vital that a sufficient effect be quickly obtained with the few we had. . . .

The committee's function was, of course, entirely advisory. The ultimate responsibility for the recommendation to the President rested upon me, and I have no desire to veil it. The conclusions of the committee were similar to my own, although I reached mine independently. I felt that to extract a genuine surrender from the Emperor and his military advisers, they must be administered a tremendous shock which would carry convincing proof of our power to destroy the Empire. Such an effective shock would save many times the number of lives, both American and Japanese, than it would cost.

The facts upon which my reasoning was based and steps taken to carry it out now follow.

The principal political, social, and military objective of the United States in the summer of 1945 was the prompt and complete surrender of Japan. Only the complete destruction of her military power could open the way to lasting peace. . . .

In the middle of July 1945, the intelligence section of the War Department General Staff estimated Japanese military strength as follows: in the home islands, slightly under 2,000,000; in Korea, Manchuria, China proper, and Formosa, slightly over 2,000,000; in French Indo-China, Thailand, and Burma, over 200,000; in the East Indies area, including the Philippines, over 500,000; in the by-passed Pacific islands, over 100,000. The total strength of the Japanese Army was estimated at about 5,000,000 men.

<sup>1</sup>George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, 1939–1945.

<sup>2</sup>Undersecretary of the navy and a member of the Interim

Committee. He was the single member of the Interim Committee to oppose its recommendations.

These estimates later proved to be in very close agreement with official Japanese figures. . . .

As we understood it in July, there was a very strong possibility that the Japanese government might determine upon resistance to the end, in all the areas of the Far East under its control. In such an event the Allies would be faced with the enormous task of destroying an armed force of five million men and five thousand suicide aircraft, belonging to a race which had already amply demonstrated its ability to fight literally to the death.

The strategic plans of our armed forces for the defeat of Japan, as they stood in July, had been prepared without reliance upon the atomic bomb, which had not yet been tested in New Mexico. We were planning an intensified sea and air blockade, and greatly intensified strategic air bombing, through the summer and early fall, to be followed on November 1 by an invasion of the southern island of Kyushu. This would be followed in turn by an invasion of the main island of Honshu in the spring of 1946. The total U.S. military and naval force involved in this grand design was of the order of 5,000,000 men; if all those indirectly concerned are included, it was larger still.

We estimated that if we should be forced to carry this plan to its conclusion, the major fighting would not end until the latter part of 1946, at the earliest. I was informed that such operations might be expected to cost over a million casualties to American forces alone. Additional large losses might be expected among our allies, and, of course, if our campaign were successful and if we could judge by previous experience, enemy casualties would be much larger than our own.

It was already clear in July that even before the invasion we should be able to inflict enormously severe damage on the Japanese homeland by the combined application of "conventional" sea and air power. The critical question was whether this kind of action would induce surrender. It therefore became necessary to consider very carefully the probable state of mind of the

enemy, and to assess with accuracy the line of conduct which might end his will to resist.

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- ▷ After Japan on July 28 rejected the Potsdam ultimatum, which gave their leaders the choice of immediate surrender or the "utter destruction of the Japanese homeland," plans went forward for using the atomic bombs.
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Because of the importance of the atomic mission against Japan, the detailed plans were brought to me by the military staff for approval. With President Truman's warm support I struck off the list of suggested targets the city of Kyoto. Although it was a target of considerable military importance, it had been the ancient capital of Japan and was a shrine of Japanese art and culture. We determined that it should be spared. I approved four other targets including the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Hiroshima was bombed on August 6, and Nagasaki on August 9. These two cities were active working parts of the Japanese war effort. One was an army center; the other was naval and industrial. Hiroshima was the headquarters of the Japanese Army defending southern Japan and was a major military storage and assembly point. Nagasaki was a major seaport and it contained several large industrial plants of great wartime importance. We believed that our attacks had struck cities which must certainly be important to the Japanese military leaders, both Army and Navy, and we waited for a result. We waited one day.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

. . . As I look back over the five years of my service as Secretary of War, I see too many stern and heartrending decisions to be willing to pretend that war is anything else than what it is. The face of war is the face of death; death is an inevitable part of every order that a wartime leader gives. The decision to use the atomic bomb was a decision that brought death to over a hundred thousand Japanese. No explanation can

change that fact and I do not wish to gloss it over. But this deliberate, premeditated destruction was our least abhorrent choice. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put an end to the Japanese war. It stopped the fire raids and the strangling blockade; it ended the ghastly specter of a clash of great land armies.

In this last great action of the Second World War we were given final proof that war is death. War in the twentieth century has grown steadily

more barbarous, more destructive, more debased in all its aspects. Now, with the release of atomic energy, man's ability to destroy himself is very nearly complete. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended a war. They also made it wholly clear that we must never have another war. This is the lesson men and leaders everywhere must learn, and I believe that when they learn it they will find a way to lasting peace. There is no other choice.





## Gandhi's Vision for India



### ▼ Mohandas Gandhi, "INDIAN HOME RULE"

Mohandas Gandhi, the outstanding figure in modern Indian history, was born in 1869 in a village north of Bombay on the Arabian Sea. His father was an important government official who presided over an extended family with strict Hindu religious practices. Gandhi studied law in England, and after failing to establish a legal practice in Bombay, he moved to South Africa in 1893 to serve the area's large Indian population.

In South Africa, he became incensed over the laws that discriminated against Indians, many of whom were indentured servants employed by whites. During his struggle to improve the lot of South Africa's Indian population, Gandhi developed his theory of satyagraha, usually translated into English as "soul force." Satyagraha sought social justice, not through violence but through love, a willingness to suffer, and conversion of the oppressor. Central to its strategy was massive nonviolent resistance: Gandhi's followers disobeyed unjust laws and accepted the consequences — even beatings and imprisonment — to reach the hearts of the British and change their thinking.

Gandhi first wrote about his theories of satyagraha in 1908 after meeting with a group of Indian nationalists in England who favored force to oust the British. In response, he composed a pamphlet, "Hind Swaraj," or "Indian Home Rule," in which he explained his theory of nonresistance and his doubts about the benefits of modern civilization. Written in the form of a dialogue between a reader and an editor (Gandhi), "Indian Home Rule" was printed in hundreds of editions and still serves as the best summary of Gandhi's philosophy.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Gandhi see as the major deficiency of modern civilization?
2. How, according to Gandhi, has civilization specifically affected women?
3. Why does Gandhi have faith that Hindus and Muslims will be able to live in peace in India?
4. What, according to Gandhi, is true civilization, and what is India's role in preserving it?
5. What leads Gandhi to his conviction that love is stronger than force?
6. Why did Gandhi's attack on civilization gain him support among the Indian masses?

7. How does Gandhi's view of the West compare to the comments on Western civilization in the Japanese nationalist treatise "The Way of Subjects" (source 94)?
8. Compare Gandhi's view of progress with that of Condorcet (source 38). On what points do the two men disagree?

## CHAPTER VI

### *Civilization*

READER: Now you will have to explain what you mean by civilization. . . .

EDITOR: Let us first consider what state of things is described by the word "civilization." Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life. We will take some examples: The people of Europe today live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilization, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness. Formerly, they wore skins, and used as their weapons spears. Now, they wear long trousers, and for embellishing their bodies they wear a variety of clothing, and, instead of spears, they carry with them revolvers containing five or more chambers. If people of a certain country, who have hitherto not been in the habit of wearing much clothing, boots, etc., adopt European clothing, they are supposed to have become civilized out of savagery. Formerly, in Europe, people plowed their lands mainly by manual labor. Now, one man can plow a vast tract by means of steam-engines, and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilization. Formerly, the fewest men wrote books, that were most valuable. Now, anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's minds. Formerly, men traveled in wagons; now they fly through the air, in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day. This is considered the height of civilization. It has been stated that, as men progress, they shall be able to travel in airships and reach any part of the world in a few hours. Men will not need the use of their hands and feet. They will press a button, and they will

have their clothing by their side. They will press another button, and they will have their newspaper. A third, and a motor-car will be in waiting for them. They will have a variety of delicately dished up food. Everything will be done by machinery. Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. This is civilization. Formerly, men worked in the open air only so much as they liked. Now, thousands of workmen meet together and for the sake of maintenance work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires. Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion, now they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are now diseases of which people never dreamed before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. This is a test of civilization. Formerly, special messengers were required and much expense was incurred in order to send letters; today, anyone can abuse his fellow by means of a letter for one penny. True, at the same cost, one can send one's thanks also. Formerly, people had two or three meals consisting of homemade bread and vegetables; now, they require something to eat every two hours, so that they have hardly leisure for anything else. What more need I say? All this you can ascertain from several authoritative books. These are all true tests of civilization. And, if any one speaks to the contrary, know that he is ignorant. This civilization takes note neither of morality nor of religion. . . .

This civilization is irreligion, and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad. They lack real physical strength or courage. They keep up their energy by intoxication. They can hardly be happy in solitude. Women, who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets, or they slave away in factories. For the sake of a pittance, half a million women in England alone are laboring under trying circumstances in factories or similar institutions. This awful fact is one of the causes of the daily growing suffragette movement.

This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed.

## CHAPTER X

### *The Condition of India (Continued)*

#### *The Hindus and the Muslims*

READER: But I am impatient to hear your answer to my question. Has the introduction of Islam not unmade the nation?

EDITOR: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals, but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Parsees<sup>1</sup> and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion

synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India.

READER: But what about the inborn enmity between Hindus and Muslims?

EDITOR: That phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy.<sup>2</sup> When the Hindus and Muslims fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain. They have long since ceased to fight. How, then, can there be any inborn enmity? Pray remember this too, that we did not cease to fight only after British occupation. The Hindus flourished under Muslim sovereigns and Muslims under the Hindu. Each party recognized that mutual fighting was suicidal, and that neither party would abandon its religion by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent the quarrels recommenced. . . .

Hindus and Muslims own the same ancestors, and the same blood runs through their veins. Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Muslim different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause for quarreling?

## CHAPTER XIII

### *What Is True Civilization?*

READER: You have denounced railways, lawyers and doctors. I can see that you will discard all machinery. What, then, is civilization?

EDITOR: The answer to that question is not difficult. I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors. Rome went, Greece shared the same fate, the might of the Pharaohs was broken, Japan has become westernized, of China nothing can be said, but India is still, somehow or other, sound

<sup>1</sup>Members of the Zoroastrian religion in India who descended from Persian refugees of the seventh and eighth centuries.

<sup>2</sup>The British.



at the foundation. The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory. In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome. Such is their pitiable condition. In the midst of all this, India remains immovable, and that is her glory. It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilized, ignorant, and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change. Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady. This is her beauty; it is the sheet-anchor of our hope.

Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati<sup>3</sup> equivalent for civilization means "good conduct."

If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *Passive Resistance*

READER: Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul-force or truth-force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force. I still think that the evil-doers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment.

EDITOR: . . . The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. . . .

The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. Therefore the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.

Thousands, indeed, tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. . . . Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.

READER: According to what you say, it is plain that instances of the kind of passive resistance are not to be found in history. It is necessary to understand this passive resistance more fully. It will be better, therefore, if you enlarge upon it.

EDITOR: [Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms.] When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me: I do not like it, if, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.]

Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes. Men have before now done many things which were subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim to be absolutely in the right, or that a particular thing is wrong, because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his

<sup>3</sup>An Indian dialect spoken in Gujarat, in northwest India.

deliberate judgment. It is, therefore, meet [proper] that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. This is the key to the use of soul-force. . . .

READER: From what you say, I deduce that passive resistance is a splendid weapon of the weak but that, when they are strong, they may take up arms.

EDITOR: This is gross ignorance. Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms. How, then, can it be considered only a weapon of the weak? Physical-force men are strangers to the courage that is requisite in a passive resister. Do you believe that a coward can ever disobey a law that he dislikes? Extremists are considered to be advocates of brute-force. Why do they, then, talk about obeying laws? I do not blame them. They can say nothing else. When they succeed in driving out the English, and they themselves become governors, they will want you and me to obey their laws. And that is a fitting thing for their constitution. But a passive resister will say he will not

obey a law that is against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon.

What do you think? Wherein is courage required — in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and to be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior — he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend or he who controls the death of others? Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.

This, however, I will admit: that even a man, weak in body, is capable of offering this resistance. One man can offer it just as well as millions. Both men and women can indulge in it. It does not require the training of an army; it needs no Jiu-jitsu. Control over the mind is alone necessary, and, when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest, and his very glance withers the enemy.

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood, it produces far-reaching results.



## The Maoist Version of Marxism



▼ *Mao Zedong,*  
*REPORT ON AN INVESTIGATION OF THE*  
*PEASANT MOVEMENT IN HUNAN and*  
*STRATEGIC PROBLEMS OF CHINA'S*  
*REVOLUTIONARY WAR*

Mao Zedong (1893–1976) was born into a well-to-do peasant family in Hunan Province and as a university student participated in the anti-Qing revolution of 1911. During the next several years, while serving as a library assistant at Beijing University, he embraced Marxism and helped organize the Chinese Communist Party, which was officially founded in 1921. Originally given the task of organizing urban labor unions, Mao gradually came to believe that in China the peasants, whose capacity for class revolution was discounted by orthodox Marxist-Leninists, were the force to lead China to socialism. He summarized his ideas in his “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan,” written in 1927.

After the break from the Guomindang, the Communists took their small army to the remote and hilly region on the Hunan-Jiangxi border, where in 1931 they proclaimed the Chinese Soviet Republic. In 1934 Chiang Kai-shek's troops surrounded the Communists' forces, but as they moved in for the kill, more than one hundred thousand Communist troops and officials broke out of the Guomindang encirclement and embarked on the Long March. This legendary trek lasted more than a year and covered six thousand miles before a remnant found safety in the remote mountains around Yan'an in northern Shaanxi province. There Mao, now the party's recognized leader, rebuilt his army and readied himself and his followers for what would be fourteen more years of struggle against the Japanese and Guomindang.

Mao was a prolific writer, who from the 1920s until his death in 1976 produced many hundreds of treatises, essays, and even works of poetry. The following



excerpts are drawn from two of his most important writings. The first, his *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, was written in 1927 after he visited Hunan Province to study the activities and accomplishments of peasant associations, groups of peasants who with the help of Communist organizers, had seized land, humiliated or killed landlords, and taken control of their communities. In it Mao expresses his faith in the poor peasantry as the main source of revolution in China. The second excerpt, from his *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War*, was based on a series of lectures presented to the Red Army College in late 1936. In it Mao assessed China's military situation and outlined his strategy for victory over the Guomindang through guerrilla warfare.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What specific developments in Hunan Province have reinforced Mao's convictions about the peasantry as a revolutionary force?
2. What criticisms have been made of the Hunan peasant movement, and how does Mao attempt to counter these criticisms?
3. What can be learned from these two writings about Mao's views of the role of the Communist Party in China's revolutionary struggle?
4. According to Mao, what have been the sources of oppression of the Chinese people? Once these sources of oppression are removed what will China look like?
5. According to Mao, what are the four unique characteristics of China's revolutionary war, and how do they affect Mao's military strategy?
6. What are the characteristics of Mao's "active defense" as opposed to "passive defense"?
7. How do Mao's ideas about revolution resemble and differ from those of Marx (source 63)? How do they resemble and differ from those of Lenin (source 91)?

### FROM REPORT ON AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PEASANT MOVEMENT IN HUNAN

During my recent visit to Hunan<sup>1</sup> I made a first-hand investigation of conditions in the five counties of Hsiangtan, Hsianghsiang, Hengshan, Liling and Changsha. . . . I saw and heard of many strange things of which I had hitherto been unaware. . . . All talk directed against the peas-

ant movement must be speedily set right. All the wrong measures taken by the revolutionary authorities concerning the peasant movement must be speedily changed. Only thus can the future of the revolution be benefited. For the present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time, in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift

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<sup>1</sup>Hunan, a province of 105,000 square miles in southeast central China, had a population of approximately twenty-eight million in 1936.

and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly. . . .

"Yes, peasant associations are necessary, but they are going rather too far." This is the opinion of the middle-of-the-roaders. But what is the actual situation? True, the peasants are in a sense "unruly" in the countryside. Supreme in authority, the peasant association allows the landlord no say and sweeps away his prestige. This amounts to striking the landlord down to the dust and keeping him there. . . . People swarm into the houses of local tyrants and evil gentry who are against the peasant association, slaughter their pigs and consume their grain. They even loll for a minute or two on the ivory-inlaid beds belonging to the young ladies in the households of the local tyrants and evil gentry. At the slightest provocation they make arrests, crown the arrested with tall paper-hats, and parade them through the villages, saying, "You dirty landlords, now you know who we are!" . . . This is what some people call "going too far," or "exceeding the proper limits in righting a wrong," or "really too much." Such talk may seem plausible, but in fact it is wrong. First, the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords have themselves driven the peasants to this. For ages they have used their power to tyrannize over the peasants and trample them underfoot; that is why the peasants have reacted so strongly. . . . Secondly, a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely

and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the power of the feudal landlord class. Without using the greatest force, the peasants cannot possibly overthrow the deep-rooted authority of the landlords which has lasted for thousands of years. . . . To put it bluntly, it is necessary to create terror for a while in every rural area, or otherwise it would be impossible to suppress the activities of the counter-revolutionaries in the countryside or overthrow the authority of the gentry.

▼ ▼ ▼

A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of three systems of authority: (1) the state system, . . . ranging from the national, provincial and county government down to that of the township; (2) the clan system, . . . ranging from the central ancestral temple and its branch temples down to the head of the household; and (3) the supernatural system (religious authority), ranging from the King of Hell down to the town and village gods belonging to the nether world, and from the Emperor of Heaven down to all the various gods and spirits belonging to the celestial world. As for women, in addition to being dominated by these three systems of authority, they are also dominated by the men (the authority of the husband). These four authorities — political, clan, religious and masculine — are the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology, and are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people, particularly the peasants. . . .

The political authority of the landlords is the backbone of all the other systems of authority. With that overturned, the clan authority, the religious authority and the authority of the husband all begin to totter. . . . In many places the peasant associations have taken over the temples of the gods as their offices. Everywhere

they advocate the appropriation of temple property in order to start peasant schools and to defray the expenses of the associations, calling it "public revenue from superstition." In Liling County, prohibiting superstitious practices and smashing idols have become quite the vogue. . . .

In places where the power of the peasants is predominant, only the older peasants and the women still believe in the gods, the younger peasants no longer doing so. Since the latter control the associations, the overthrow of religious authority and the eradication of superstition are going on everywhere. As to the authority of the husband, this has always been weaker among the poor peasants because, out of economic necessity, their womenfolk have to do more manual labour than the women of the richer classes and therefore have more say and greater power of decision in family matters. With the increasing bankruptcy of the rural economy in recent years, the basis for men's domination over women has already been weakened. With the rise of the peasant movement, the women in many places have now begun to organize rural women's associations; the opportunity has come for them to lift up their heads, and the authority of the husband is getting shakier every day. In a word, the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology is tottering with the growth of the peasants' power.

## STRATEGIC PROBLEMS OF CHINA'S REVOLUTIONARY WAR

What then are the characteristics of China's revolutionary war?

I think there are four.

The first is that China is a vast semi-colonial country which is unevenly developed both politically and economically. . . .

The unevenness of political and economic development in China — the coexistence of a frail capitalist economy and a preponderant semi-feudal economy; the coexistence of a few modern industrial and commercial cities and the bound-

less expanses of stagnant rural districts; the coexistence of several millions of industrial workers on the one hand and, on the other, hundreds of millions of peasants and handicraftsmen under the old regime; the coexistence of big warlords controlling the Central government and small warlords controlling the provinces; the coexistence of two kinds of reactionary armies, i.e., the so-called Central army under Chiang Kai-shek and the troops of miscellaneous brands under the warlords in the provinces; and the coexistence of a few railway and steamship lines and motor roads on the one hand and, on the other, the vast number of wheel-barrow paths and trails for pedestrians only, many of which are even difficult for them to negotiate. . . .

The second characteristic is the great strength of the enemy.

What is the situation of the Guomindang, the enemy of the Red Army? It is a party that has seized political power and has relatively stabilized it. It has gained the support of the principal counter-revolutionary countries in the world. It has remodeled its army, which has thus become different from any other army in Chinese history and on the whole similar to the armies of the modern states in the world; its army is supplied much more abundantly with arms and other equipment than the Red Army, and is greater in numerical strength than any army in Chinese history, even than the standing army of any country in the world. . . .

The third characteristic is that the Red Army is weak and small. . . .

Our political power is dispersed and isolated in mountainous or remote regions, and is deprived of any outside help. In economic and cultural conditions the revolutionary base areas are more backward than the Guomindang areas. The revolutionary bases embrace only rural districts and small towns. . . .

The fourth characteristic is the Communist Party's leadership and the agrarian revolution.

This characteristic is the inevitable result of the first one. It gives rise to the following two features. On the one hand, China's revolutionary



war, though taking place in a period of reaction in China and throughout the capitalist world, can yet be victorious because it is led by the Communist Party and supported by the peasantry. Because we have secured the support of the peasantry, our base areas, though small, possess great political power and stand firmly opposed to the political power of the Guomindang which encompasses a vast area; in a military sense this creates colossal difficulties for the attacking Guomindang troops. The Red Army, though small, has great fighting capacity, because its men under the leadership of the Communist Party have sprung from the agrarian revolution and are fighting for their own interests, and because officers and men are politically united.

On the other hand, our situation contrasts sharply with that of the Guomindang. Opposed to the agrarian revolution, the Guomindang is deprived of the support of the peasantry. Despite the great size of its army it cannot arouse the bulk of the soldiers or many of the lower-rank officers, who used to be small producers, to risk their lives voluntarily for its sake. Officers and men are politically disunited and this reduces its fighting capacity. . . .

Military experts of new and rapidly developing imperialist countries like Germany and Japan positively boast of the advantages of strategic offensive and condemn strategic defensive. Such an idea is fundamentally unsuitable for China's revolutionary war. Such military experts point out that the great shortcoming of defense lies in the fact that, instead of gingering up [enlivening] the people, it demoralizes them. . . . Our

case is different. Under the slogan of safeguarding the revolutionary base areas and safeguarding China, we can rally the greatest majority of the people to fight single-mindedly, because we are the victims of oppression and aggression. . . . Defensive battles in a just war can not only exercise a lulling influence on the politically alien elements but mobilize the backward sections of the masses to join in the war. . . .

In military terms, our warfare consists in the alternate adoption of the defensive and the offensive. It makes no difference to us whether our offensive is regarded as following the defensive or preceding it, because the turning-point comes when we smash the campaigns of "encirclement and annihilation." It remains a defensive until a campaign of "encirclement and annihilation" is smashed, and then it immediately begins as an offensive; they are but two phases of the same thing, as one campaign of "encirclement and annihilation" of the enemy is closely followed by another. Of the two phases, the defensive phase is more complicated and more important than the offensive phase. It involves numerous problems of how to smash the campaign of "encirclement and annihilation." The basic principle is for active defense and against passive defense.

In the civil war, when the Red Army surpasses the enemy in strength, there will no longer be any use for strategic defensive in general. Then our only directive will be strategic offensive. Such a change depends on an overall change in the relative strength of the enemy and ourselves. The only defensive measures that remain will be of a partial character.



## Cold War Origins: A U.S. Perspective



### ▼ *George Kennan, THE LONG TELEGRAM*

Historians have minutely examined the events and issues that led to the Cold War, and much has been written about which side, the Soviet Union or the United States, was to blame for causing it. One thing is certain, however: 1946 was a pivotal year in Soviet-U.S. relations. Until then, despite wartime disagreements over military strategy and emerging differences about the postwar settlement, many statesmen and diplomats sought cooperation, not confrontation, between the two emerging superpowers. During 1946, however, attitudes hardened, and moderates such as the U.S. Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace and the Soviet career diplomat Maksim Litvinov were removed from office. When negotiations over nuclear arms control failed in June and the Paris foreign ministers' conference over Eastern Europe ended in acrimony in August, leaders on both sides concluded that Soviet-U.S. conflict was inevitable.

Within the U.S. government one document in particular articulated this bleak assessment of Soviet-U.S. relations in 1946. Written in February by the Moscow-based career diplomat George Kennan, what came to be known as the Long Telegram profoundly influenced U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union in the immediate postwar era and throughout the Cold War. Its author, born into a strict Protestant household in Milwaukee in 1904, entered the U.S. Foreign Service directly after graduating from Princeton in 1925. Having mastered Russian through studies at the University of Berlin, he had postings in Moscow, Berlin, and Prague before returning to Moscow in 1944 as a special advisor to the U.S. ambassador to the

Soviet Union, Averell Harriman. In early February 1946 he received a directive from the State Department to analyze a recent speech by Joseph Stalin that Washington considered confrontational and hostile. Kennan, an advocate of a hard line against the Soviet Union, used the opportunity to compose what is arguably the best-known such dispatch in the history of the U.S. Foreign Service. The Long Telegram was read by State Department officials, cabled to U.S. embassies around the world, and made required reading for hundreds of military officers. In 1947 an edited version of the telegram was published as an article by "X" in the journal *Foreign Affairs*.

In 1947 Kennan was appointed head of the State Department's newly created policy planning staff charged with responsibility for mapping out long-range foreign policy strategy. His opposition to the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to increased military spending, and to U.S. involvement in the Korean War led to his resignation in 1951. Since then with the exception of brief ambassadorships to the Soviet Union in 1952 and to Yugoslavia between 1961 and 1963, he has devoted himself to research, writing, and university teaching on foreign policy and Soviet affairs.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What views of capitalism and socialism are presented, according to Kennan, in official Soviet propaganda?
2. What does Kennan consider the most notable characteristics of the Russian past?
3. How, according to Kennan, has this past shaped the policies and views of the Soviet government since 1917?
4. In Kennan's view what role does communist ideology play in shaping the Soviet government's policies?
5. According to Kennan, what strengths and weaknesses does the Soviet Union bring to the anticipated conflict with the United States?
6. What, according to Kennan, are the implications of his analysis for U.S. foreign and domestic policies? What must be done to counter the Soviet threat?

### PART 1: BASIC FEATURES OF POST-WAR SOVIET OUTLOOK, AS PUT FORWARD BY OFFICIAL PROPAGANDA MACHINE, ARE AS FOLLOWS

(a) USSR still lives in antagonistic "capitalist encirclement" with which in the long run there can be no permanent peaceful coexistence. . . .

(b) Capitalist world is beset with internal conflicts, inherent in nature of capitalist society. . . . Greatest of them is that between England and US.

(c) Internal conflicts of capitalism inevitably generate wars. Wars thus generated may be of two kinds: intra-capitalist wars between two capitalist states and wars of intervention against socialist world. Smart capitalists, vainly seeking

escape from inner conflicts of capitalism, incline toward the latter.

(d) Intervention against USSR, while it would be disastrous to those who understood it, would cause renewed delay in progress of Soviet socialism and must therefore be forestalled at all costs.

(e) Conflicts between capitalist states, though likewise fraught with danger for USSR, nevertheless hold out great possibilities for advancement of socialist cause, particularly if USSR remains militarily powerful, ideologically monolithic and faithful to its present brilliant leadership. . . .

## PART 2: BACKGROUND OF OUTLOOK

At bottom of Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. Originally, this was insecurity of a peaceful agricultural people trying to live on vast exposed plain in neighborhood of fierce nomadic peoples. To this was added, as Russia came into contact with economically advanced West, fear of more competent, more powerful, more highly organized societies in that area. But this latter type of insecurity was one which afflicted Russian rulers rather than Russian people; for Russian rulers have invariably sensed that their rule was relatively archaic in form, fragile and artificial in its psychological foundations, unable to stand comparison or contact with political systems of Western countries. For this reason they have always feared foreign penetration, feared direct contact between Western world and their own, feared what would happen if Russians learned truth about world without or if foreigners learned truth about world within. And they have learned to seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it.

It was no coincidence that Marxism, which had smouldered ineffectively for half a century in Western Europe, caught hold and blazed for the first time in Russia. Only in this land which had

never known a friendly neighbor or indeed any tolerant equilibrium of separate powers, either internal or international, could a doctrine thrive which viewed economic conflicts of society as insoluble by peaceful means. After establishment of Bolshevik regime, Marxist dogma, rendered even more truculent and intolerant by Lenin's interpretation, became a perfect vehicle for sense of insecurity with which Bolsheviks, even more than previous Russian rulers, were afflicted. In this dogma, with its basic altruism of purpose, they found justification for their instinctive fear of outside world, for the dictatorship without which they did not know how to rule, for cruelties they did not dare not to inflict, for sacrifices they felt bound to demand. In the name of Marxism they sacrificed every single ethical value in their methods and tactics. Today they cannot dispense with it. It is fig leaf of their moral and intellectual respectability. Without it they would stand before history, at best, as only the last of that long succession of cruel and wasteful Russian rulers who have relentlessly forced country on to ever new heights of military power in order to guarantee external security of their internally weak regimes. . . . Thus Soviet leaders are driven [by] necessities of their own past and present position to put forward a dogma which [apparent omission] outside world as evil, hostile and menacing, but as bearing within itself germs of creeping disease and destined to be wracked with growing internal convulsions until it is given final coup de grace by rising power of socialism and yields to new and better world. . . .

## PART 3: PROJECTION OF SOVIET OUTLOOK IN PRACTICAL POLICY ON OFFICIAL LEVEL

We have now seen nature and background of Soviet program. What may we expect by way of its practical implementation? . . .

On official plane we must look for following:



(a) Internal policy devoted to increasing in every way strength and prestige of Soviet state: intensive military-industrialization; maximum development of armed forces; great displays to impress outsiders; continued secretiveness about internal matters, designed to conceal weaknesses and to keep opponents in the dark.

(b) Wherever it is considered timely and promising, efforts will be made to advance official limits of Soviet power. . . .

(c) Russians will participate officially in international organizations where they see opportunity of extending Soviet power or of inhibiting or diluting power of others. . . .

(d) Toward colonial areas and backward or dependent peoples, Soviet policy . . . will be directed toward weakening of power and influence and contacts of advanced Western nations, on theory that insofar as this policy is successful, there will be created a vacuum which will favor Communist-Soviet penetration. . . .

(e) Russians will strive energetically to develop Soviet representation in, and official ties with, countries in which they sense strong possibilities of opposition to Western centers of power. This applies to such widely separated points as Germany, Argentina, Middle Eastern countries, etc.

(f) In international economic matters, Soviet policy will really be dominated by pursuit of autarchy<sup>1</sup> for Soviet Union and Soviet-dominated adjacent areas taken together. . . .

#### PART 4: FOLLOWING MAY BE SAID AS TO WHAT WE MAY EXPECT BY WAY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF BASIC SOVIET POLICIES ON UNOFFICIAL, OR SUBTERRANEAN PLANE. . . .

(a) To undermine general political and strategic potential of major Western Powers. Efforts

will be made in such countries to disrupt national self-confidence, to hamstring measures of national defense, to increase social and industrial unrest, to stimulate all forms of disunity. All persons with grievances, whether economic or racial, will be urged to seek redress not in mediation and compromise, but in defiant, violent struggle for destruction of other elements of society. Here poor will be set against rich, black against white, young against old, newcomers against established residents, etc. . . .

(c) Where individual governments stand in path of Soviet purposes pressure will be brought for their removal from office. . . .

(d) In foreign countries Communists will, as a rule, work toward destruction of all forms of personal independence — economic, political or moral. Their system can handle only individuals who have been brought into complete dependence on higher power. Thus, persons who are financially independent — such as individual businessmen, estate owners, successful farmers, artisans — and all those who exercise local leadership or have local prestige — such as popular local clergymen or political figures — are anathema.

(e) Everything possible will be done to set major Western Powers against each other. Anti-British talk will be plugged among Americans, anti-American talk among British. Continentals, including Germans, will be taught to abhor both Anglo-Saxon powers.<sup>2</sup> . . .

#### PART 5: [PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS FROM STANDPOINT OF US POLICY]

In summary, we have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with US there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*,<sup>3</sup> that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority

<sup>1</sup>Economic self-sufficiency as a national policy; getting along without goods from other countries.

<sup>2</sup>England and the United States.

<sup>3</sup>Latin for "manner of living"; hence, a temporary agreement in a dispute pending final settlement.



of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure. . . . In addition, it has an elaborate and far-flung apparatus for exertion of its influence in other countries, an apparatus of amazing flexibility and versatility, managed by people whose experience and skill in underground methods are presumably without parallel in history. Finally, it is seemingly inaccessible to considerations of reality in its basic reactions. . . . This is admittedly not a pleasant picture. Problem of how to cope with this force [is] undoubtedly greatest task our diplomacy has ever faced and probably greatest it will ever have to face. . . . But I would like to record my conviction that problem is within our power to solve — and that without recourse to any general military conflict. And in support of this conviction there are certain observations of a more encouraging nature I should like to make:

(1) Soviet power, unlike that of Hitlerite Germany, is neither schematic<sup>4</sup> nor adventuristic. It does not work by fixed plans. It does not take unnecessary risks. Impervious to logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw — and usually does — when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need be no prestige-engaging showdowns.

(2) Gauged against Western world as a whole, Soviets are still by far the weaker force. Thus, their success will really depend on degree of cohesion, firmness and vigor which Western world can muster. . . .

(3) Success of Soviet system, as form of internal power, is not yet finally proven. . . .

(4) All Soviet propaganda beyond Soviet security sphere is basically negative and destructive.

It should therefore be relatively easy to combat it by any intelligent and really constructive program.

For these reasons I think we may approach calmly and with good heart problem of how to deal with Russia. As to how this approach should be made, I only wish to advance, by way of conclusion, following comments:

(1) Our first step must be to apprehend, and recognize for what it is, the nature of the movement with which we are dealing. We must study it with same courage, detachment, objectivity, and same determination not to be emotionally provoked or unseated by it, with which doctor studies unruly and unreasonable individual.

(2) We must see that our public is educated to realities of Russian situation. . . .

(3) Much depends on health and vigor of our own society. World communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue. This is point at which domestic and foreign policies meet. Every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems of our own society, to improve self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit of our own people, is a diplomatic victory over Moscow worth a thousand diplomatic notes and joint communiqués. . . .

(4) We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in past. . . .

(5) Finally we must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet communism is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.

<sup>4</sup>In this context, having a definite outline or plan to follow.



## Apartheid's Bitter Fruits



### ▼ *Nelson Mandela,* *THE RIVONIA TRIAL SPEECH* *TO THE COURT*

Blacks in South Africa have been victims of racism since the Dutch founded the first permanent white settlement at Cape Town in the seventeenth century. After South Africa was granted independence from Great Britain in 1910, in 1913 blacks formed the African National Congress (ANC) to foster unity among blacks and to work for political rights. At first the ANC sought to reach its goals through petitions and appeals to white politicians, but following the implementation of apartheid after World War II, it sponsored Gandhi-inspired campaigns of passive resistance and supported strikes by black labor unions. Violence often resulted, leading to more government repression and further steps to stifle black political activity.

Predictably, some blacks abandoned moderation for sabotage and terrorism. Among them was Nelson Mandela (b. 1918), the son of a tribal chieftain, who became a lawyer and an ANC activist in the 1940s. After the ANC was outlawed in 1960 and after he organized a three-day stay-at-home protest in 1961, Mandela went into hiding. While avoiding a nationwide manhunt, he helped found *Umkonto we Sizwe* ("Spear of the Nation"), a branch of the ANC that carried out bombings in several South African cities. Arrested in 1963, he, along with other ANC leaders, was convicted of treason and sent to the notorious prison on Robben Island in the Atlantic Ocean forty miles from the coast.

Mandela remained a prisoner until 1990, when he reassumed leadership of the ANC after having been freed by the South African president, F. W. de Klerk. Prodded by de Klerk and pressured by the ANC and the international community, in 1991 the South African legislature repealed the foundation statutes of the apartheid era. In 1994 white rule ended when national elections were held for a new parliament. The ANC won 252 of 400 seats, and Mandela was installed as South Africa's president in May 1994. Later in the year Nelson Mandela, a man who spent twenty-seven years in prison, and F. W. de Klerk, a man who came out of the ranks of those who imprisoned him, were declared co-winners of the Nobel Peace Prize. Their steps toward ending apartheid and all the bitterness, suffering, and fear that went with it gave hope that other human beings could resolve similar deep-rooted conflicts in other parts of the world.

The following excerpt comes from a speech delivered by Nelson Mandela on April 20, 1964, in which he opened his defense against charges of treason before an all-white court.

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### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why did Mandela decide that the ANC must resort to violence to achieve its goals?

2. What distinction does he draw between sabotage and terrorism?
3. Why were Mandela and other ANC leaders attracted to communism?
4. What aspects of apartheid does Mandela find most degrading?
5. According to Mandela, how does apartheid affect the daily lives of the Africans?

In my youth . . . I listened to the elders of my tribe telling stories of the old days. Amongst the tales they related to me were those of wars fought by our ancestors in defense of the fatherland. . . . I hoped then that life might offer me the opportunity to serve my people and make my own humble contribution to their freedom struggle: This is what has motivated me in all that I have done in relation to the charges made against me in this case. . . .

I have already mentioned that I was one of the persons who helped to form Umkonto. I, and the others who started the organization, did so for two reasons. Firstly, we believed that as a result of Government policy, violence by the African people had become inevitable, and that unless responsible leadership was given to canalize and control the feelings of our people, there would be outbreaks of terrorism which would produce an intensity of bitterness and hostility between the various races of this country which is not produced even by war. Secondly, we felt that without violence there would be no way open to the African people to succeed in their struggle against the principle of White supremacy. All lawful modes of expressing opposition to this principle had been closed by legislation, and we were placed in a position in which we had either to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or to defy the Government. . . .)

But the violence which we chose to adopt was not terrorism. (We who formed Umkonto were all members of the African National Congress, and had behind us the ANC tradition of non-violence and negotiation as a means of solving political disputes. We believed that South Af-

rica belonged to all the people who lived in it, and not to one group, be it Black or White. We did not want an interracial war, and tried to avoid it to the last minute. . . .)

The African National Congress was formed in 1912 to defend the rights of the African people which had been seriously curtailed by the South Africa Act, and which were then being threatened by the Native Land Act.<sup>1</sup> For thirty-seven years — that is until 1949 — it adhered strictly to a constitutional struggle. It put forward demands and resolutions; it sent delegations to the Government in the belief that African grievances could be settled through peaceful discussion and that Africans could advance gradually to full political rights. But White Governments remained unmoved, and the rights of Africans became less instead of becoming greater. . . .

Even after 1949, the ANC remained determined to avoid violence. At this time, however, there was a change from the strictly constitutional means of protest which had been employed in the past. The change was embodied in a decision which was taken to protest against apartheid legislation by peaceful, but unlawful, demonstrations against certain laws. Pursuant to this policy the ANC launched the Defiance Campaign, in which I was placed in charge of volunteers. This campaign was based on the principles of passive resistance. More than 8,500 people defied apartheid laws and went to jail. Yet there was not a single instance of violence in the course of this campaign on the part of any defier. . . .

During the Defiance Campaign, the Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act were passed. (These statutes provided harsher

<sup>1</sup>The South Africa Act was approved by the British in 1909 and enacted in 1910; it established the Union of South Africa out of the four colonies of Transvaal, the Orange

Free State, Natal, and the Cape Colony. The Native Land Act (1913) was a South African law restricting the areas where nonwhites could own land.



penalties for offenses committed by way of protests against laws. Despite this, the protests continued and the ANC adhered to its policy of non-violence.]

In 1960 there was the shooting at Sharpeville,<sup>2</sup> which resulted in the proclamation of a state of emergency and the declaration of the ANC as an unlawful organization. My colleagues and I, after careful consideration, decided that we would not obey this decree. The African people were not part of the Government and did not make the laws by which they were governed. We believed in the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>3</sup> that "the will of the people shall be the basis of authority of the Government," and for us to accept the banning was equivalent to accepting the silencing of the Africans for all time. The ANC refused to dissolve, but instead went underground. . . .

It must not be forgotten that by this time violence had, in fact, become a feature of the South African political scene. . . . Each disturbance pointed clearly to the inevitable growth among Africans of the belief that violence was the only way out — it showed that a Government which uses force to maintain its rule teaches the oppressed to use force to oppose it. . . .

The avoidance of civil war had dominated our thinking for many years, but when we decided to adopt violence as part of our policy, we realized that we might one day have to face the prospect of such a war. . . . We did not want to be committed to civil war, but we wanted to be ready if it became inevitable.

Four forms of violence were possible. There is sabotage, there is guerrilla warfare, there is terrorism, and there is open revolution. [We chose to adopt the first method and to exhaust it before taking any other decision.]

In the light of our political background the choice was a logical one. Sabotage did not involve loss of life, and it offered the best hope for future race relations. Bitterness would be kept

to a minimum and, if the policy bore fruit, democratic government could become a reality. . . .

Attacks on the economic life lines of the country were to be linked with sabotage on Government buildings and other symbols of apartheid. These attacks would serve as a source of inspiration to our people. In addition, they would provide an outlet for those people who were urging the adoption of violent methods and would enable us to give concrete proof to our followers that we had adopted a stronger line and were fighting back against Government violence. . . .

Another of the allegations made by the State is that the aims and objects of the ANC and the Communist Party are the same. I wish to deal with this and with my own political position, because I must assume that the State may try to argue from certain Exhibits that I tried to introduce Marxism into the ANC. . . .

It is true that there has often been close cooperation between the ANC and the Communist Party. But cooperation is merely proof of a common goal — in this case the removal of White supremacy — and is not proof of a complete community of interests. . . .

It is perhaps difficult for White South Africans, with an ingrained prejudice against communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept communists as their friends. But to us the reason is obvious. Theoretical differences amongst those fighting against oppression is a luxury we cannot afford at this stage. What is more, for many decades communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and their equals; who were prepared to eat with us; talk with us, live with us, and work with us. They were the only political group which was prepared to work with the Africans for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society. Because of this, there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with communism. . . .

<sup>2</sup>The Sharpeville Massacre took place in 1960 when police killed 69 and wounded 178 antiapartheid demonstrators.

<sup>3</sup>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

It is not only in internal politics that we count communists as amongst those who support our cause. In the international field, communist countries have always come to our aid. In the United Nations and other Councils of the world the communist bloc has supported the Afro-Asian struggle against colonialism and often seems to be more sympathetic to our plight than some of the Western powers. Although there is a universal condemnation of apartheid, the communist bloc speaks out against it with a louder voice than most of the White world. . . .

Our fight is against real, and not imaginary, hardships or, to use the language of the State prosecutor, "so-called hardships." Basically, we fight against two features which are the hallmarks of African life in South Africa and which are entrenched by legislation which we seek to have repealed. These features are poverty and lack of human dignity. . . .

South Africa is the richest country in Africa, and could be one of the richest countries in the world. But it is a land of extremes and remarkable contrasts. The Whites enjoy what may well be the highest standard of living in the world, whilst Africans live in poverty and misery. Forty percent of the Africans live in hopelessly overcrowded and, in some cases, drought-stricken Reserves, where soil erosion and the overworking of the soil makes it impossible for them to live properly off the land. Thirty percent are laborers, labor tenants, and squatters on White farms and work and live under conditions similar to those of the serfs of the Middle Ages. The other 30 percent live in towns where they have developed economic and social habits which bring them closer in many respects to White standards. Yet most Africans, even in this group, are impoverished by low incomes and high cost of living.

The complaint of Africans, however, is not only that they are poor and the Whites are rich, but that the laws which are made by the Whites are designed to preserve this situation. There are two ways to break out of poverty. The first is by formal education, and the second is by the worker acquiring a greater skill at his work and thus

higher wages. As far as Africans are concerned, both these avenues of advancement are deliberately curtailed by legislation. . . .

The lack of human dignity experienced by Africans is the direct result of the policy of White supremacy. White supremacy implies Black inferiority. Legislation designed to preserve White supremacy entrenches this notion. Menial tasks in South Africa are invariably performed by Africans. When anything has to be carried or cleaned the White man will look around for an African to do it for him, whether the African is employed by him or not. Because of this sort of attitude, Whites tend to regard Africans as a separate breed. They do not look upon them as people with families of their own; they do not realize that they have emotions — that they fall in love like White people do; that they want to be with their wives and children like White people want to be with theirs; that they want to earn enough money to support their families properly, to feed and clothe them and send them to school. And what "houseboy" or "garden-boy" or laborer can ever hope to do this? . . .

Poverty and the breakdown of family life have secondary effects. Children wander about the streets of the townships because they have no schools to go to, or no money to enable them to go to school, or no parents at home to see that they go to school, because both parents (if there be two) have to work to keep the family alive. This leads to a breakdown in moral standards, to an alarming rise in illegitimacy, and to growing violence which erupts, not only politically, but everywhere. Life in the townships is dangerous. There is not a day that goes by without somebody being stabbed or assaulted. . . .

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against White domination, and I have fought against Black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

## A Cry for Justice in the United States



### ▼ *Martin Luther King, Jr.,* *A LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL*

On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Mrs. Rosa Parks, an elderly black seamstress who was sitting in the back of a bus in the “colored section,” refused to give up her seat to a white man who had to stand. She was arrested and fined, and in response, a young pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church organized a boycott of the Montgomery bus system by the city’s blacks. The U.S. civil rights movement had begun, and with it, the young pastor, Martin Luther King, Jr., emerged as its leader. Until his assassination in 1968, Reverend King’s bravery, moral vision, and moving words inspired millions of followers and forced the nation to confront the implications of its long history of racial prejudice and oppression.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta on January 15, 1929, the son of the Reverend Martin Luther King and Mrs. Alberta Williams King. Educated at Morehouse College, Crozier Theological Seminary, and Boston University, where he received a doctorate in philosophy, King served as a pastor in Montgomery and then became co-pastor with his father of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. After the Montgomery bus boycott he became president of the Southern Christian Leadership Council and organized voter registration drives in Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington in 1963 provided the civil rights movement with one of its most memorable moments. In the mid 1960s King extended his activities to the cities of the North and spoke out against the Vietnam War. In 1968 he traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to support a strike by sanitation workers. There, he was assassinated, a crime for which James Earl Ray, a small-town thief and an escaped prisoner from the Missouri state penitentiary, was tried and convicted.

King wrote “A Letter from a Birmingham Jail” in April 1963, while he was serving a brief jail sentence for participating in civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham. It was an open letter to eight prominent Alabama clergymen who had criticized his leadership and strategy in the civil rights movement.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to King, what specific criticisms have been made of his civil rights campaign in Birmingham? What alternatives have King’s critics recommended?
2. How does King respond to these criticisms?
3. King describes his method as “nonviolent direct action.” What does he mean by this?
4. According to King, what are the main obstacles preventing blacks from achieving their goals in the civil rights movement?



5. King sees similarities between the U.S. civil rights movement and the efforts of Asians and Africans to throw off the bonds of imperialism. Is his analogy valid? Why or why not?

MY DEAR FELLOW CLERGYMEN,

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom, if ever, do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all of the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would be engaged in little else in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I would like to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms. . . .

You may well ask, "Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc.? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. I just referred to the creation of tension as a part of the work of the nonviolent resister. This may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word *tension*. I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension that is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and

objective appraisal, we must see the need of having nonviolent gadflies<sup>1</sup> to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. So the purpose of the direct action is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. . . .

One of the basic points in your statement is that our acts are untimely. Some have asked, "Why didn't you give the new administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this inquiry is that the new administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one before it acts. . . .

We all know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was "well-timed," according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." It has been a tranquilizing thalidomide,<sup>2</sup> relieving the emotional stress for a moment, only to give birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration. . . .

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jet-like speed toward the goal of political independence, and we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a

<sup>1</sup>Any of various flies, such as horseflies, that bite or annoy livestock; in human relations, an intentionally annoying person who stimulates or provokes others by persistent irritating criticism. The philosopher Socrates (ca. 469–399 B.C.E.) considered himself a "gadfly" among his fellow Athenians.

<sup>2</sup>In 1961 the drug thalidomide, used to treat nausea during pregnancy, was found to be associated with a syndrome of congenital malformations, especially of the arms. About ten thousand babies were affected worldwide.



lunch counter. I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son asking in agonizing pathos: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating

sense of "nobodiness"; then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. [There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the blackness of corroding despair.] I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954<sup>3</sup> outlawing segregation in the public schools, it is rather strange and paradoxical to find us consciously breaking laws. One may well ask, "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: there are *just* and there are *unjust* laws. I would agree with Saint Augustine<sup>4</sup> that "Any unjust law is no law at all." ]

Now what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of Saint Thomas Aquinas,<sup>5</sup> an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law. [Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority, and the segregated a false sense of inferiority.]

Let me give another explanation. An unjust law is a code inflicted upon a minority which that minority had no part in enacting or creating because they did not have the unhampered

<sup>3</sup>*Brown v. Board of Education* was a famous Supreme Court decision that grew out of a suit brought by Oliver Brown against the Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education when his daughter was denied permission to attend an all-white school in her neighborhood. The court ruled that segregation at all levels of public schooling was illegal.

<sup>4</sup>St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 C.E.), a North African bishop and theologian, was a seminal figure in the history of Christian thought.

<sup>5</sup>Aquinas (1225[?]-1274), a Dominican friar, was a leading medieval Catholic theologian.

right to vote. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up the segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout the state of Alabama all types of conniving methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters and there are some counties without a single Negro registered to vote despite the fact that the Negro constitutes a majority of the population. Can any law set up in such a state be considered democratically structured? . . .

You spoke of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of the extremist. I started thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency made up of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, have been so completely drained of self-respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation, and, of a few Negroes in the middle class who, because of a degree of academic and economic security, and because at points they profit by segregation, have unconsciously become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up over the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement.<sup>6</sup> This movement is nourished by the contemporary frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination. It is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incurable "devil." I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need not follow the "do-nothingism" of the complacent or the hatred and despair of the black

nationalist. (There is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. . . .)

I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are presently misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with the destiny of America. Before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. For more than two centuries our foreparents labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; and they built the homes of their masters in the midst of brutal injustice and shameful humiliation — and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. . . .

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil rights leader, but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. (Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all of their scintillating beauty.)

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

<sup>6</sup>Founded in Detroit in the early 1930s, the Black Muslims in 1934 came under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, a Georgian originally named Elijah Poole. He moved the organization's headquarters to Chicago, where he preached

black self-reliance and separatism from white society. At the time of his death in 1975, Black Muslim membership numbered between 150,000 and 200,000.







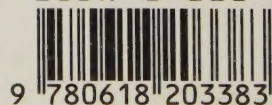




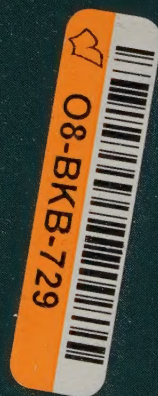
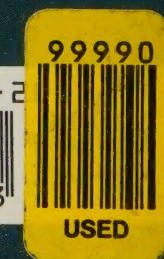
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